

Saturday 20 August 2016

Amateur Photographer

Passionate about photography since 1884

Travel compact showdown
Lumix TZ100
Canon G7 X II
Sony RX100 IV **TESTED**



Brilliant bokeh

... **but** is it worth spending
£1,500 on the Sony Planar
T* FE 50mm f/1.4 ZA?

Top dogs!

The world's finest dog
photographers share
their tips for success



Split level

Impress your friends
with this **simple**
technique

Flying high

Ben Hall on
how to capture
birds in flight

PLUS Harry Borden meets **David Bailey** • **Robert Capa's** colour photography

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COVER PICTURE © ELKE VOGELSANG, GRAHAM EATON

In this issue

12 Slice of life

AP talks to three photographers who explore split-level photography – images both above and below the water

22 A dog's life

We take a look at some of our favourite entries in the 10th Dog Photographer of the Year competition

26 Gone to the dogs

Top dog photographer Elke Vogelsang talks tips, tricks and techniques with Geoff Harris

32 Capa in colour

Karen Sheard reports on the touring exhibition that explores Robert Capa's body of colour work

34 Flying high

Ben Hall provides tips on capturing birds in flight

40 When Harry met

Although David Bailey was initially brusque, shooting his portrait ended up a pleasure for Harry Borden

42 Appraisal

Expert advice and tips on improving your photography from Damien Demolder

46 Pocket compacts

Matt Golowczynski pits three top enthusiast models against each other

53 Sony Planar T* FE 50mm f/1.4 ZA

Andy Westlake tries out Sony's latest premium fast prime designed for Alpha 7 users

Regulars

3 7 days

8 Bookshelf

19 Inbox

30 Photo Insight

44 Accessories

57 Technical Support

82 Final Analysis



When my kids were younger they were my go-to subjects for photography, but now they are teenagers and react to the sight of a camera like vampires do to holy water, I've had to look for alternatives. Luckily, I now have a dog, and he has stepped, tail wagging, into the breach.

Dogs make fabulous photographic subjects – they are cute, funny and full of character – but they are not always easy to photograph. So,

we've featured some of the world's best dog photographers in this issue, including Elke Vogelsang (pages 26-27) and winners of Dog Photographer of the Year (pages 22-25).

If you prefer photographing birds, Ben Hall shares his expertise on how to get pictures of them in flight. Or, if you're more of a water lover, we show you how to create impressive above-and-below-water images. This should be enough to keep you busy until next week!

Nigel Atherton, Editor

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ONLINE PICTURE OF THE WEEK



© STEVE BOYLE

IMAGES MAY BE USED FOR PROMOTION PURPOSES ONLINE AND ON SOCIAL MEDIA

When We Grow Up by Steve Boyle

Canon EOS 700D, 24-85mm, 1/400sec at f/13, ISO 200

This image was uploaded to our Flickr page. 'I shot this image at Les Rencontres d'Arles 2016, the biggest photography festival in Europe,' says Steve. 'The portraits are by Parisian photographer Cyrille Robin. I've actually contacted him, and fortunately, he likes my image.'

'I was drawn by the similar textures of the wall and the skies in

the portrait backgrounds. I'm also particularly fond of the shadow created by the unstuck image as it flaps in the breeze. As the two figures entered the scene, interacting with the portraits, they completed my image. It was shot with a Canon EOS 700D with a 24-85mm zoom set to the wide end.'



Win! Each week we choose our favourite picture on Facebook, Flickr, Twitter, Instagram or the reader gallery using #appicoftheweek. PermaJet proudly supports the online picture of the week winner, who will receive a top-quality print of their image on the finest PermaJet paper. It is important to bring images to life outside the digital sphere, so we encourage everyone to get printing today! Visit www.permajet.com to learn more.

Send us your pictures

If you'd like to see your work published in *Amateur Photographer*, here's how to send us your images:

Email Email a selection of low-res images (up to 5MB of attachments in total) to appicturedesk@timeinc.com.

CD/DVD Send us a disc of high-resolution JPEG, TIFF or PSD images (at least 2480 pixels along its longest length), with a contact sheet, to the address on page 20.

Via our online communities Post your pictures into our Flickr group, Facebook page, Twitter feed, or the gallery on our website. See details above.

Transparencies/prints Well-packaged prints or slides (without glass mounts) should be sent by Special Delivery, with a return SAE, to the address on page 20.

NEWS ROUND-UP

The week in brief, edited by Chris Cheesman

Nikon's latest waterproof camera

Next month Nikon will launch the Coolpix W100 – a new compact camera built to be both waterproof and shockproof. The 13.2-million-pixel model features a 2.7in (230,000-dot resolution) LCD screen and is designed to shoot for up to an hour underwater, down to 10m. It's set to cost £129.99.



Best travel shots showcased

Stunning images from the Travel Photographer of the Year (TPOTY) 2015 have gone on show in a free exhibition in London. They will be on display until 4 September at 10 Stockwell Street, Greenwich

(part of the University of Greenwich). Meanwhile, TPOTY 2016 is open for entries, boasting a £30,000 prize pot. Visit www.tpoty.com.

Monitor for photographers

BenQ has launched a 27in monitor targeting photographers and videographers. Priced around £788, the BenQ PV270 offers 2,560x1,440 QHD (Quad High Definition) resolution and 'crisp picture quality expected for close reviews and detailed editing'. Visit www.xpdistribution.com.



Leica SL improved

Leica has released free firmware and software updates for the SL. The Leica Image Shuttle 3.4 software enables the camera to be controlled from a computer via a USB 3.0 cable, while the

Leica Tethered Plug-in 1.1.0 allows a direct connection between the SL and Adobe Photoshop 6/CC via USB. Firmware update 2.1 must be installed first. Visit owners.leica-camera.com/en/login.

£2m boost for online store

Mpb.com, a UK photography dealer based in Brighton, East Sussex, has landed a £2m investment to open an office in New York as well as expand into the Germany market. The company, which allows customers to buy, sell and exchange equipment, was set up eight years ago by economics graduate Matt Barker using a £10,000 graduate loan.



WEEKEND PROJECT

DIY Lightroom time-savers

Lightroom has become the go-to program for dealing with large numbers of raw files. It packs in a huge number of tools for organising, saving and presenting your images, along with fuss-free editing. Another benefit of Lightroom is the ease of adding presets – a saved series of edits and effects that you can apply with a single click (or automatically apply as you import images into the main Develop module). Say you want to convert 50 images to mono. Adding a saved Preset could turn a laborious, two-hour job into a 10-minute one. While you can find a lot of third-party presets, it's often more efficient to make presets yourself. Here's how to do it.

1 Make the adjustments that will form the basis of your preset. For example, converting to mono, then moving the colour channel sliders to deepen or lighten tones. Make sure the final edits can be applied to a series of shots.

2 In the Preset pane on the left of the main interface, click the + symbol. In the pop-up dialog box, check that the relevant adjustments are ticked and click on the Create button to make your individual User Preset.

© GRANT OROELHEIDE



BIG picture

Last chance to enter
2016 USA Landscape
Photographer of the Year

◀ The Landscape Photographer of the Year (LPOTY) competition, founded by Charlie Waite, is a well-known staple in the UK photography calendar, but what you may not be aware of is that an annual competition for US landscapes was introduced two years ago. The USA is known for some photogenic wildernesses, as we can see in this 2015 My USA category-winning image by Grant Ordelheide. Grant captured this awesome display of nature over the Grand Canyon. It's a perfectly timed shot and goes to show that patience and perseverance can give you images to cherish for a lifetime. There are a variety of prizes on offer for USA LPOTY, including a \$15,000 top prize for the overall adult winner. Entries close on 15 September 2015, and the winners will be announced in January. For more details, visit www.usalpoty.com.

Words & numbers

To have one's passions collide together like this is truly one of life's most wonderful moments

Steph Gibson

Winner of Dog Photographer of the Year 2014 contest

10,000

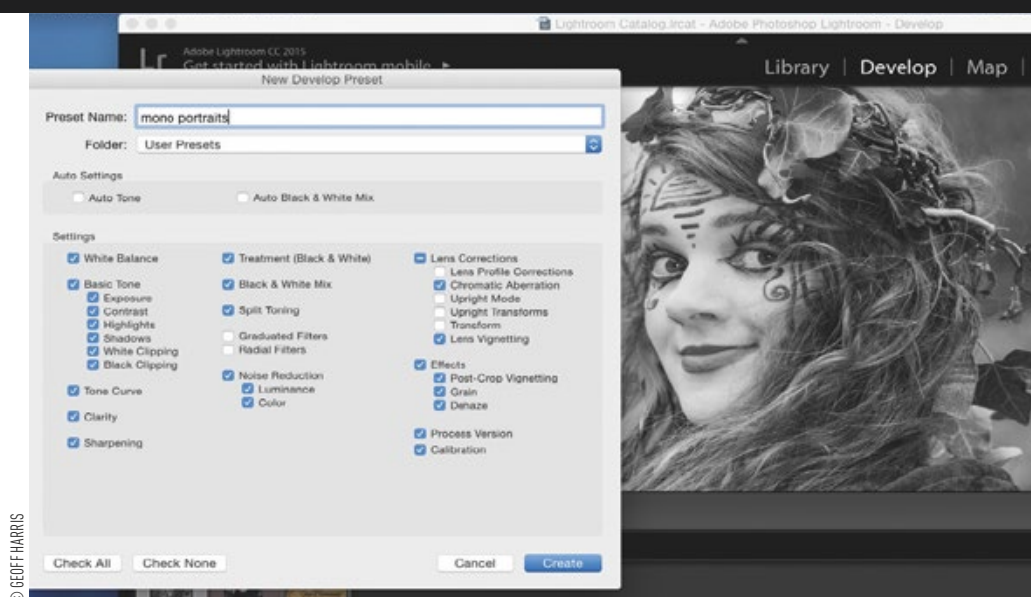
Number of French and Spanish students who visited Visa pour L'Image in Perpignan, France, in 2015

SOURCE: VISA POUR L'IMAGE

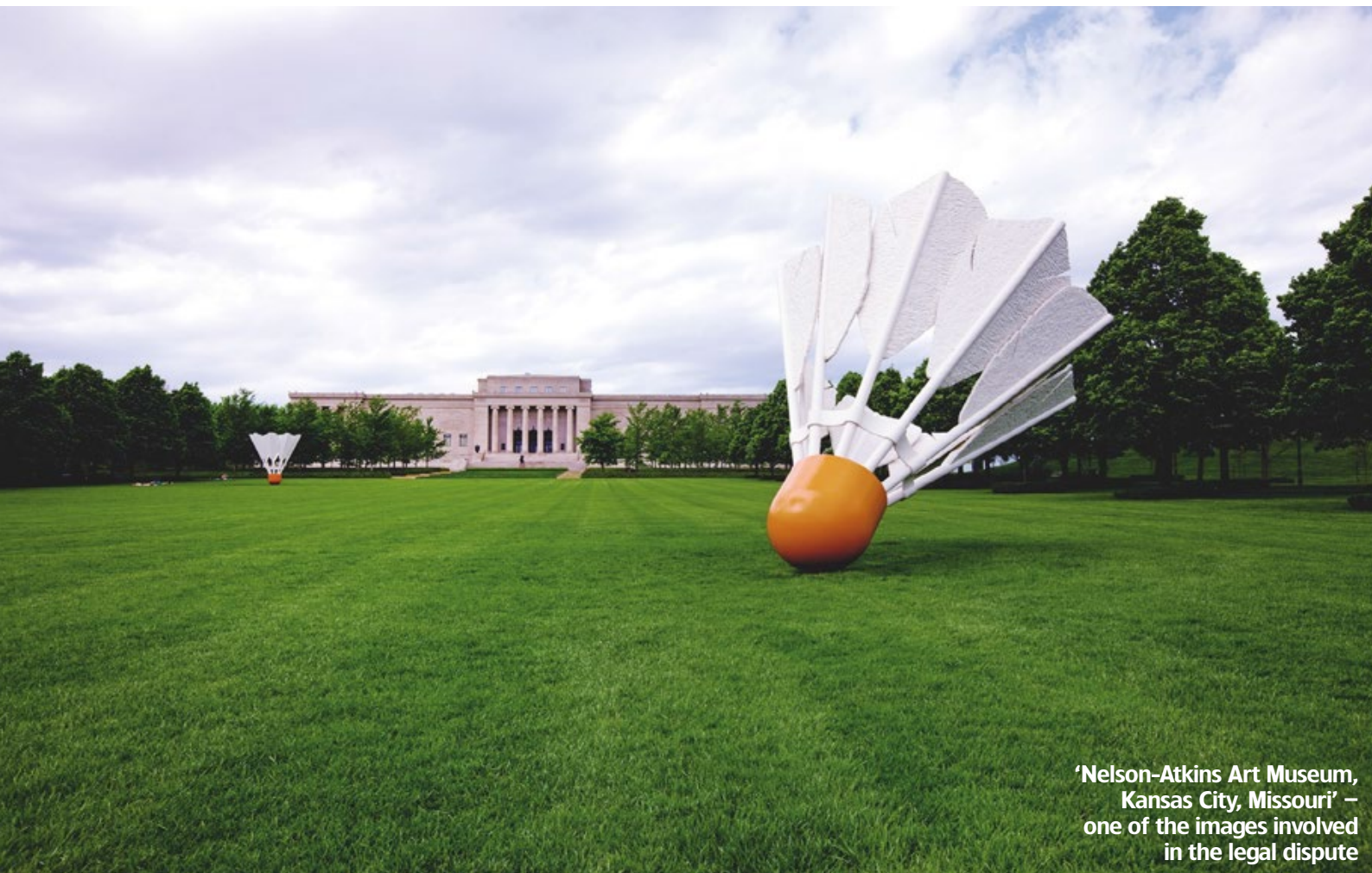


3 The new preset will appear in the User Preset Folder. Select another image in the Develop module and apply the new Preset. Try adding it to more images at the Import stage, via the Quick Develop module.

4 Presets are rarely 100% click and go. Each image is different, so you may need to fine tune specific areas. Mastinlabs.com and vsco.com provide a choice of film emulation presets, but they don't come cheap.



Presets take two clicks to set up, but can save hours



'Nelson-Atkins Art Museum, Kansas City, Missouri' – one of the images involved in the legal dispute

© CAROL M. HIGSMITH'S AMERICA, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION



© OLIVER HENDERSON


Competition marks World Photo Day

 **PHOTO retailer**
Calumet has launched a competition for students to mark World Photo Day on 19 August. World Photo Day encourages photographers to share their images in an online gallery. The date coincides with when Louis Daguerre's daguerreotype process was officially revealed to the world in 1839.

Calumet is challenging students to participate for the chance to win a share of prizes totalling £11,000. Entrants are urged to upload one image along with 20 words about their submission, at www.calphoto.co.uk/student-awards. Calumet student members are allowed to enter an additional two images.

This year's judges include Canon Ambassador Simeon Quarrie and the 2015 winner Oliver Henderson, whose winning image is pictured above.

Photographer sues Getty Images for \$1 billion

 GETTY Images is set to 'vigorously' defend a \$1 billion copyright lawsuit lodged by photographer Carol Highsmith, who is suing the US picture library for 'gross misuse' of 18,755 of her images. The renowned American photographer claims that Getty violated her rights for each of the 18,755 photographs displayed on the Getty website.

The copyright action concerns photos that Highsmith donated to the Library of Congress in 1988. According to the lawsuit, the donation gave the public 'the right to reproduce and display all the photographs at issue in this lawsuit, for free'. Highsmith claims Getty Images was purporting to sell licences for thousands of her photographs on commercial websites.

The lawsuit, filed on 25 July at a United States District Court in New York, is seeking up to \$1 billion in copyright damages from Getty. The mammoth figure is based on the outcome of a previous case (*Morel v Getty*), which allows the court to treble the maximum \$468,875,000 statutory damages sought, according

to Highsmith's Dallas-based lawyers Carstens & Cahoon.

The photographer, who lives in Maryland, USA, says the matter came to her attention when she received a demand for payment for use of one of the images on her own website.

The lawsuit adds: 'At no time did Ms Highsmith intend to abandon her rights in her photographs, including any rights of attribution or rights to control the terms of use for her photographs, nor was it ever her intent to enable third parties to purport to sell licenses for her photographs, or send threatening [sic] letters to people who used her photos.'

In response, Getty Images denied asserting copyright over the images. The Seattle-based library said in a statement: 'We are reviewing the complaint. We believe it is based on a number of misconceptions, which we hope to rectify with the plaintiff as soon as possible. If that is not possible, we will defend ourselves vigorously.'

'It is standard practice for image libraries to distribute and provide

access to public domain content, and it is important to note that distributing and providing access to public domain content is different to asserting copyright ownership of it.'

Highsmith's lawyers declined to comment on the ongoing litigation when contacted by AP.



© THE LYDA HILL TEXAS COLLECTION OF PHOTOGRAPHS IN CAROL M. HIGSMITH'S AMERICA PROJECT, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION

Carol M Highsmith at Big Bend National Park in Brewster County, Texas, USA



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This nostalgia-infused image won the top prize for Gemma Astbury

© GEMMA ASTBURY

Scratched photo wins Fuji awards gong

FUJIFILM Student Photographer of the Year 2016 has been awarded to Gemma Astbury, who inserted scratches to her nostalgia-infused image for added authenticity. Gemma used Fujifilm Fujichrome Velvia 100 transparency film to shoot her winning photo, called 'Happisburgh Fences'. The Norwich University student said she cross-processed the film to create a 'dreamlike haze with the rocks standing like a wall

between the audience and the sea'. The theme of this year's contest was 'Shoot from the Hip'. Gemma's entry had won the February round of the competition, which required entrants to submit images taken on Fujifilm Professional film. Steve Macleod, director of competition sponsor Metroprint, said of the winning shot: 'At first glance, the image feels ephemeral, disposable and transient. However, when studying in more

detail it evokes feelings of past times, memories and loss. 'It's hard to judge images such as these as they can be viewed as fleeting glances that can be discarded so easily – at the same time they can recall deep abstract feelings, which can impact and remain in the memory.' Gemma's prizes included £200 worth of Fujifilm. To view all the winning images, visit www.fujifilmstudentawards.co.uk.

World's best drone photos revealed

AN ITALIAN photographer has won Dronestagram's International Drone Photography Contest, a contest held in partnership with National Geographic.

Dronestagram set out to find the best aerial photographs from across the world, writes Louis Taylor.

An image of the Basilica of Saint Francis of Assisi in Italy (right) immersed in fog, by Francesco Cattuto, stood out from among the 6,000 entries and was awarded first place in the travel category. It was shot using a DJI Phantom 3.

Francesco, a project manager and avid photographer, says he captures 'fleeting moments of human experience'. Francesco has also documented locations in Sardinia and



© FRANCESCO CATTUTO

The winning image shows the Basilica of St Francis of Assisi in Umbria, Italy

the Maldives, stating that he aims to take his drone around the world.

Competition categories included sports adventure and nature wildlife.

For the latest news visit www.amateurphotographer.co.uk

Get up & go

The most interesting things to see, to do and to shoot this week. By Oliver Atwell



MANCHESTER

© TRUSTEES OF THE RAF MUSEUM

The Changing Faces of Wartime Britain

Mixing It: The Changing Faces of Wartime Britain reveals the forgotten and lesser-told histories of service personnel and civilians who came to Britain during WWII, and highlights the changes that took place as the country's ethnic diversity bloomed. Until 11 September, www.iwm.org.uk



© RAY STEVENSON

LONDON

Punk

If you're a fan of music photography, an exhibition at Michael Hoppen Gallery in London is documenting the rise of punk culture in 1970s Britain. The prints themselves are a little worn and frayed around the edges, giving the images an even greater intensity.

Until 26 August, www.michaelhoppengallery.com



© PETE ASHTON

BIRMINGHAM

Spaghetti Junction Photo Walk

Photo walks are a good way to shoot images and meet other photographers. This three-hour stroll in Birmingham explores the city's Spaghetti Junction. The walk starts at noon and you need to book through the website below.

28 August, www.ti.to/photo-school

London, Paris, New York, 1930s-60s

The museum Ben Uri is featuring its first exhibition bringing together three major 20th century photographers – Wolfgang Suschitzky, Dorothy Bohm and Neil Libbert – and presenting their artistic responses to three big cities across three crucial decades. Until 28 August, www.benuri.org.uk



© WOLFGANG SUSCHITZKY

LONDON



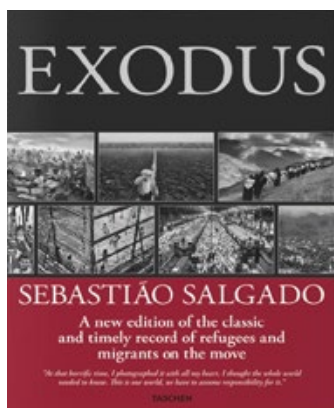
© YVETTE MONAHAN

BELFAST

Thousand Year Old Boy

Yvette Monahan's project is a photographic response to the recent archaeological discovery of the remains of a Bronze Age boy in West Ireland. Yvette's stock is in exploring myths and landscapes, and this project ably continues those themes.

Until 1 October, www.belfastexposed.org



Bookshelf

Exodus by Sebastião Salgado

It's been 16 years since **Sebastião Salgado** published his epic document of the world. **Oliver Atwell** tours the world in search of the meaning of life

Published by

Taschen

Price £44.99

432 pages

hardback

ISBN 978-3-

83656-130-3

★★★★★

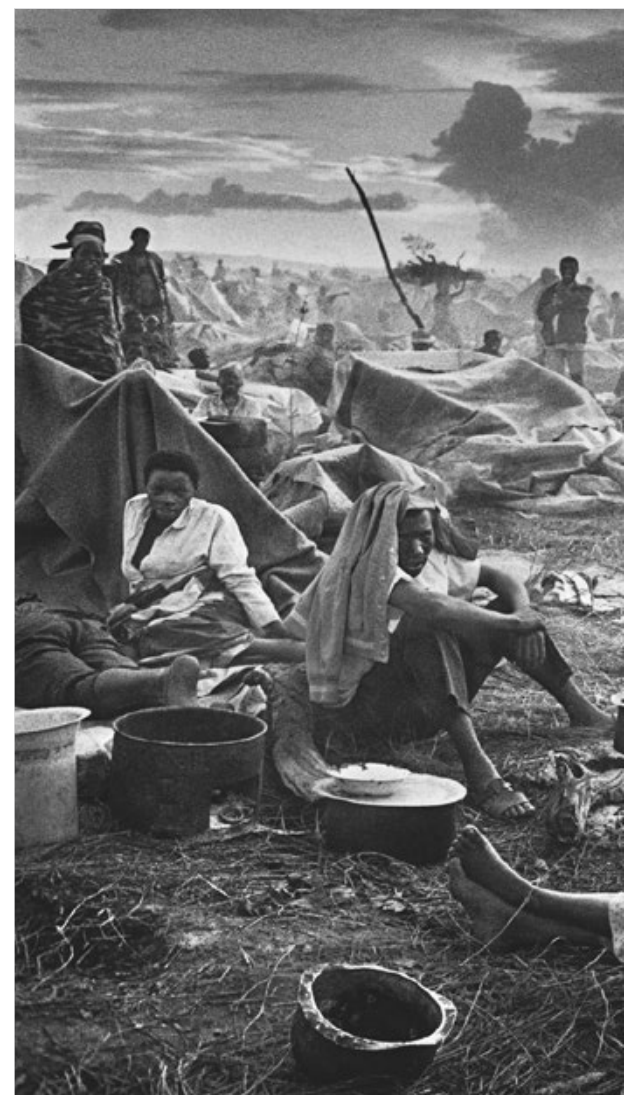
The more things change, the more they stay the same. That's perhaps the greatest lesson to take from this reissued volume of Sebastião Salgado's *Exodus*, a body of work that was six years in the making. Turn on the news, or read the headlines – migration is the big topic. *Exodus* documents Salgado's travels to 35 countries, during which time he documented the displacement of a variety of migrant communities. His journey found him treading the ground of road, slum and camp, where he encountered Latin Americans entering the US, Arabs and sub-Saharan Africans attempting to reach Europe by boat, and Hutu refugees, among many others.

Salgado's work has become known for its vast sweeping scope, and that is certainly present here. Landscapes stretch to the horizon; crowds of people appear as swarms of ants; the sun drenches a barren desert. But that's to perhaps overlook the opposite approach that Salgado often utilises. Salgado strikes

a nice balancing act between the micro and macro view. Ample space is dedicated to the smaller details, and it's perhaps these images that are the most affecting. When we're allowed to get closer in, to notice the dirt under the fingernails, to spot the bandage on a leg, to meet the haunted gaze, that's when the project truly takes hold. What Salgado is attempting to do, and does rather well, is document the commonality of the global migrant crisis and place you the viewer within the context. We all play a part in this, both knowingly and unknowingly. This is our global crisis. There is no us and them. There is only us.

Beautiful tragedy

The question is how far we should go when making suffering and hardship beautiful? Do we lose something when the things we see are rendered into aesthetic palettes of masterful tonal range and considered composition? It's a question often levelled at all forms of photojournalism, particularly competitions



‘Despite the subject matter, the images can, at times, be replete with joy’

such as the World Press Photo. Even Hollywood director Steven Spielberg found himself in the firing line after many found the highly stylised *Schindler's List* to do nothing more than undermine the true horror of its subject.

In defence, there's a strong argument to be made that the photographer's foremost task is to grab the viewer's attention. Salgado is certainly adept at that. His images are, in the most literal sense, breathtaking. He appears to have witnessed almost impossible scenes of beauty, regardless of the subject, and has somehow captured them through the lens of his camera. He appeals, perhaps quite deliberately, to the most superficial visual parts of our brains. Once that image has been digested, the reality of the message begin to seep into our conscience and we begin to question exactly what it is we're seeing. He inspires, quite crucially, genuine empathy.

But of course it's easy to focus on the more challenging images of Salgado's work. The fact is, *Exodus* is so much more than the bleak stuff. If anything, the images are a true testament to humankind. Despite the subject matter, the images can, at times, be replete with joy and admirable endurance. Even in the face of such hardship, the human



A Mozambican refugee on the Dona Ana Bridge over the Zambezi River, Mozambique, 1994

ALL PICTURES © SEBASTIÃO SALGADO/AMAZONAS IMAGES



Rwandan refugee camp of Benaco, Tanzania, 1994



Churchgate Station, Bombay (Mumbai), India, 1995

spirit carries something of a flame.

On another level, something about the black & white look of the images gives the overall feel of the project a strange edge. It feels almost like Salgado isn't there at all, that some floating objective eye on a scouting mission has delivered the images to teach us something about the world we live in. It's a stark contrast to the pretty postcard, and wholly subjective, approach of a photographer such as Steve McCurry. It's perhaps this aesthetic that makes the overall message of the work so successful. There are no colourful distractions. What

we're seeing is the raw meat of the situation. Beautiful as they are, these images carry a weight that cannot so easily be shaken off.

These pictures may have been taken years ago, but the subjects we see in *Exodus* are so familiar as to be unnervingly uncanny. It's a small thing, perhaps, to produce a photographic body of work to highlight these issues. But the fact is, no matter what you may think of him and his work, he is a photographer who is out there doing something. That's more than can be said for most of us.



Also out now

The latest and best books from the world of photography. By Oliver Atwell



© AMY DRUCKER

Real Life Family Photography

By Amy Drucker, Ilex, £12.99, 144 pages, softback, ISBN 978-1-78157-297-9



NOW two books to lighten the mood. New York-based Amy Drucker is a photographer who has spent her career juggling the dual genres of documentary portraits and creative lifestyle photography.

In this book, she has focused on what some would consider one of the most challenging genres of photography: documenting the family. We can all remember sifting through the photo albums of our youth, those cherished snapshots that inspire grimaces and fond memories. Precious as they are, we all of us have that experience of just wishing we could create something a little more enduring.

With Christmas (sort of) around the corner, this is a fine time to start thinking about creating portraits that you'll feel more than happy to stick in the album. Amy's approach is basic, and perhaps aimed at the layman photographer. However, dig a little deeper and there are some sound bits of advice, particularly as it applies to photographing children, those little bundles of energy that cannot seem to sit still for just one second. The book is a thorough and clear guide and well worth your attention. ★★★★★

Dogs on Instagram

By @dogsofinstagram, Chronicle Books, £10.99, hardback, ISBN 978-1-45215-197-7



THE WAR between cat and dog lovers is an unending quest for superiority. Now Instagram has become the latest battlefield in this dire conflict. In fact, all social media is awash with images of mutts and felines and, even for a

stone-hearted creature like me, it's difficult not to get swept up in the tsunami of cuteness. This collection of images comes from the Instagram feed @dogsofinstagram, and is perhaps the perfect present for dog lovers (in the spirit of balance we'll take a look at the feline alternative in next week's issue). Page after page is awash with dogs in hats, dogs with bows, dogs yawning, dogs in snow... you get the idea. It's difficult to review a book like this. All you can ask is, does it achieve what it set out to do? It most certainly does. ★★★★★



Viewpoint Jon Bentley

As much as we'd like to believe otherwise, classic cameras and cars don't necessarily go hand-in-hand. Do we really need modern photographic gear to appreciate classic cars?

A mildly frustrating aspect of working for *The Gadget Show* is that people expect you to use the very latest kit. If you're spotted using an old digital camera, let alone a film one, it can elicit looks of incomprehension and disappointment.

I anticipated no such critical observations at The Festival of the Unexceptional, my favourite classic car show. Rather than lines of Maseratis, Ferraris and Jaguars, it celebrates humdrum, everyday classics. Among the non-thoroughbreds on display at Whittlebury Park in Northamptonshire this year saw an immaculately cherished Austin Metro Vanden Plas, a DAF 66 and two Vauxhall Novas. The winner was a Morris Marina pickup (pictured), which had been owned by one farming family ever since the car was new.

Amidst people with an almost overzealous respect for the past I could surely use my older cameras in peace, couldn't I? Not a bit of it! Several people suggested I should be using Sony's Alpha 6300 or Alpha 7R II instead of my Alpha 6000, and one keen photographer was surprised I wasn't using Hasselblad's X1D.

All of which begs the question: should you or shouldn't you upgrade when a new model arrives on the market? If you're a professional making serious money from your photography, and the upgrade brings

valuable features, then almost certainly yes. But for the rest of us the benefits aren't so clear. I think it's generally best to hang on to what you've got, bypassing a few generations until there are significant improvements to be gained.

One problem with upgrading prematurely is that unless you're using your camera every day it can take ages to get used to it. Even if you stick to an iteration of the same basic model, manufacturers are always moving the controls around slightly so you find yourself prodding at the wrong button in the heat of the moment. On a Nikon D4S I use my left thumb for the ISO button, but for a Nikon D5 it's the index finger on my right hand.

And then there's the cost. Rather than splash out on a minor-spec upgrade, most enthusiasts are better off investing in extra lenses, better tripods and lights or hiring a model/studio. Or maybe buying the vintage camera you've always wanted.

Another great vehicle at the festival was a 1962 Austin J2 camper van whose owner had bought a contemporary FED camera to go with it. I enjoyed chatting with him about how he planned to record his travels on film. That's the kind of camera conversation I like having at a classic car show.

Jon Bentley is a TV producer and presenter best known for *Top Gear* and Channel 5's *The Gadget Show*



The winning car, a Morris Marina pickup, at the 2016 Festival of the Unexceptional classic car show

Do you have something you'd like to get off your chest? Send us your thoughts in around 500 words to the address on page 20 and win a year's digital subscription to AP, worth £79.99

Social life

Here are some of our favourite images from the world of social media this week



Twitter



Julian Calverley @juliancalverley

Julian, whose landscape images were featured in AP 26 July 2014, is also adept at creating engaging portraits, as seen here.

Join the conversation at @AP_Magazine



Facebook



Rio 2016

The Rio Olympics are in full swing, so we'll be seeing a glut of excellent action shots. In this image from Marcos de Paula we see the most iconic of Olympic scenes – the passing of the torch.

Like us on www.facebook.com/amateurphotographermagazine



Instagram



Jodi Cobb @jodicobb

In this magnificent, deceptively simple shot by Jodi Cobb, what appears to be a composite of two shots is in fact a tree reflected in the window of a Buddhist temple in Seoul, South Korea.

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KIT LIST



▲ Nauticam NA-D800 underwater housing

Underwater housing is going to be much better for this type of shooting than an underwater camera, mainly because of the additional control you will have by using your DSLR underwater.



▲ 4.3in or 8in dome port

The larger the dome port, the easier it is to take split shots. A large dome will make it easier to capture both above and below the waterline without worrying about small waves or water movement.



▲ Dual Sea&Sea YS-D1 Strobes

Strobes are great for additional lighting underwater; however if you're working in shallow water they aren't always necessary, as the light reduction and colour loss aren't very pronounced.

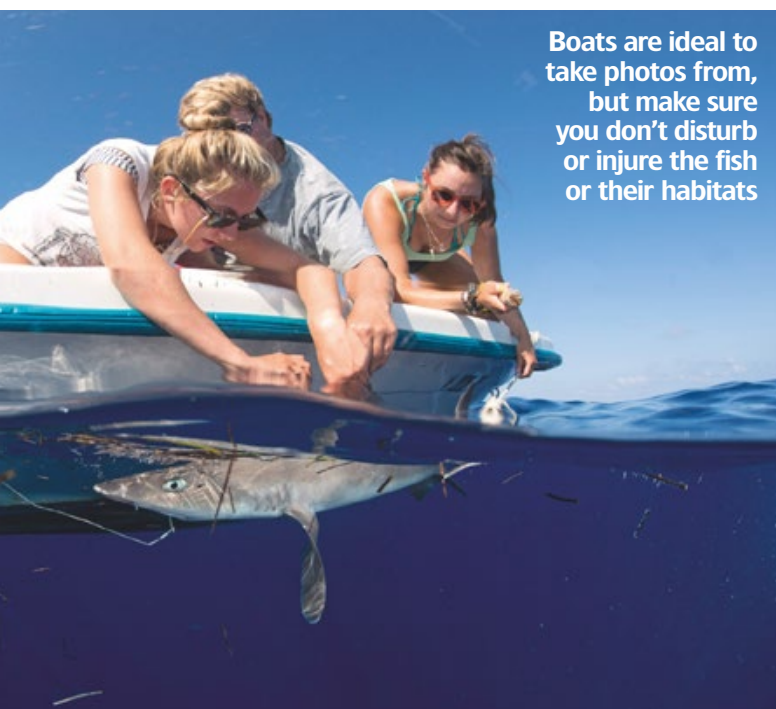


Charlotte Sams

Charlotte specialises in documenting wildlife and the natural world, particularly underwater image making, and is experienced in working in all kinds of in-water climates. She has worked for a variety of organisations and been recognised in numerous competitions. www.charlottesams.com



Two worlds for the price of one: a wideangle or fisheye lens is perfect for such shots



Boats are ideal to take photos from, but make sure you don't disturb or injure the fish or their habitats

Slice of life

Split-level photography captures images both above and below the water. AP talks to three photographers who explore these dual worlds

Getting started

Split-level photography (also known as a split shot or a half and half) is a great way to engage the viewer in two different worlds at once, and help explain the context of the action or subject you are photographing. You can take split images in almost any kind of water, whether deep, shallow, moving or still, so long as you have a main focal point.

This technique is best approached with a wideangle lens or a fisheye. You can try it with other fixed lenses, but it is most effective when considering the image as a standard fisheye shot with a twist. Your focal point can be an underwater subject or a topside subject, with the other environment serving as a background. Although it's great when you can get a split completely level and nicely balanced, the part of your image that is your underwater/topside background does not need to be huge or necessarily flat water. A wave can actually make an otherwise normal underwater image quite appealing.

Practice makes perfect

Split-level shots require some practice. Usually, you'll need to wait for the right moment to take the image, while also being aware of what changes are taking place in your frame both topside and underwater.

For beginners, rock pools are an ideal environment to practise lining up images in a safe, controlled setting. Ponds, lakes or any other calm-water environments are also good places to use this technique with a dome port or even a compact underwater camera. Once you get more comfortable with your set-up, you can venture into deeper water or moving bodies of water, where you have to be much quicker at taking your shot and more aware of your surroundings.

The difficulty in split-level photography lies in getting the right exposure for both the top and the

underwater elements. Even when working in shallows, if you have correctly exposed the top your underwater scene is likely to be underexposed. This can be fixed in post-production or with the use of strobes, video lights or any other form of external light. Depending on the clarity of your water and time of day, you may not need to light the underwater part of your image. In midday sun, the light will bear down vertically through the water, and you can use natural light to make your underwater features visible. For evening or night-time images, you will need strobes, video lights or torches. Even at this time, the strobes or external light source only needs to be on a low setting, just to light your subject and foreground. ➤

Top tips

Strobe positioning

The strobe position can make a huge difference to the lighting. I keep them primarily underwater, but in some instances you can use one split to light both topside and underwater. Or you can use one designated strobe for underwater and one topside to highlight and bring the viewer's eye back to any action that's happening above the water level. The strobes should always be positioned wide and just slightly facing your subject.

Camera angle (level)

The camera angle should be parallel with the water surface, not facing down or up. Facing the camera down into the water causes the water line to warp, and a slightly off water line will be distracting and can lead to an image being wasted.

Slower shutter speed

When you don't have a striking subject in the foreground, experiment with slower shutter speeds. If the water line is too harsh, slow down the shutter speed. The trick is to select a shutter speed that will keep the image sharp while you are floating and simultaneously keeping the camera steady.



Graham Eaton

Graham has spread his wings from Alaska to Azerbaijan and from Norway to the Red Sea in search of photographic opportunities. He was runner-up in the prestigious Wildlife Photographer of the Year and has had several successes in Landscape Photographer of the Year. Graham likes to photograph wildlife within the landscape and seek 'alternative' perspectives. Visit www.eatonnature.co.uk

The concept

I started creating split-level images because I wanted to portray the 'complete landscape', not only that part of the landscape visible to all. As a geologist by profession, I am aware of the geomorphological processes that create a landscape, and I wanted to bring these processes into the image.

This concept is what I had in mind when I worked on my image 'War and Peace' (see right), which was taken in Cwm Idwal, Snowdonia. There is the drama and theatre of the harsh mountain scene above the water, and the tranquil, surreal world beneath the surface. I wanted to capture this in a single frame. I also saw the potential of photographing birds such as ducks and swans, where you can portray the whole animal. I used flash underwater to create a surreal view of a swan feeding.

The technique

I use Sea&Sea underwater housings for my Nikon cameras. On the front of the housing is a 9in-diameter dome port – this is what provides the contact along the water line. The smaller the port, the greater the thickness of the waterline. This might be OK on a flat lake, but not if there are ripples, and for me ripples are good as they make the image less contrived. Images that have been spliced generally have perfectly flat water surfaces. The real difficulty comes from lighting and focus/depth of field.

Beneath the surface, the light can be a lot less than that above (unless you are working on a tropical reef) and needs to be balanced. To achieve this, I use at least two underwater strobes to provide fill light, plus an ND grad

filter. One frustration was finding quality circular ND grads, as the rectangular filters will not fit inside the dome port! In fact, Lee Filters modified a couple of filters for me.

Dome ports act as a lens element underwater in such a way that, in a split-level image, the focus point changes, so you have to work with underwater hyperfocal distance. This is why you often see, for example, a reed in the foreground that's misaligned above and below the water. The use of flash or strobes also has to be managed to avoid 'backscatter' from suspended particles in the water.

With careful subject selection and practice, you can obtain imaginative images that tell a story. A fast-flowing river will reveal the movement of water around rocks, and a lake will display the beauty of algal forests. In shallow water, the underwater subject needs to be close to the camera, as water clarity and light fall off quickly and can only be illuminated with a strobe over short distances.

With a close underwater subject and to preserve realistic waterlines, a small aperture is essential, particularly if your above-water background is distant, to maximise depth of field. Here will be a trade-off between correctly focusing on and illuminating your underwater scene (which will need to be close to the lens), and focusing on infinity above water while maintaining a manageable shutter/ISO combination. This is where the Nikon D3 and D3S really help, giving me the ability to shoot at high ISOs.

Research

You have to research your concept before you start work. Access permissions should be obtained and water depth, clarity, and the shadow/sun position planned for.

ALL PICTURES THESE PAGES © GRAHAM EATON



This shot, taken at Penmon Point off the south-east coast of Anglesey, is a great example of life above and below the sea



KIT LIST



◀ Sea&Sea MDX-D3 underwater housing

This housing allows total control of the camera and its menus. An expensive underwater housing is specifically designed for a particular camera, and an upgrade of a camera will require a new housing.



◀ Zen 9in dome port

This is a coated optical glass port that works well with rectilinear lenses and allows for a wide horizon or water contact line.





‘War and Peace’
Graham has heard people say that he must have taken this shot ‘through a fish tank, immersed in a lake’. He did not...



‘There is the drama and theatre of the harsh mountain scene above the water, and the tranquil, surreal world beneath the surface’



◀ **Sea&Sea YS-110 Strobe**

Essential for fill light, this strobe can be diffused and directed to illuminate an individual boulder or a whole scene, but it does not illuminate to a significant distance. I often use two strobes attached to the housing and a third as a slave strobe.

Graham wanted to portray a whole animal, such as this mallard drake, underwater





'Out for Summer'. Susan shoots all her images using a 20mm wideangle lens



Susan Guice

Susan is a fine-art photographer from Mississippi in the USA. She is known for both her underwater photography of children and her aerial landscapes of the endangered coastal waterways of Mississippi and Louisiana. These images form part of her series 'Beneath the Surface', which reveals a world of natural fluidity and ease beneath water. You can see more at www.susanguice.com

Specialised gear

For this type of swimming-pool photography, you need a good waterproof camera housing. I use an Ikelite scuba housing (base price around \$1,700/£1,300) for my Nikon D800. This is a professional housing, and it will go deep – much deeper than my current swimming-pool series requires. You will also need to invest a few hundred pounds to acquire the appropriate scuba-lens cover for the lens you want to use.

Because swimming pools are clear water, I don't require any lighting devices for the housing. However, because light does not travel well in water, you need a relatively high ISO (1,000-1,500). You must have a nice sunny day or the shots will be milky and without sufficient density to create a great print.

Camera settings

I shoot everything with a 20mm wideangle lens. This is because I need to be relatively close to the subject, and because there is a good chance that the kids will do something unexpected and I don't want their legs or arms to be cropped. Typically, I set my aperture at f/5.6. I want my background slightly out of focus, and the water cuts the light by several f-stops. On a clear day, I set my ISO at 1,000-1,500. My Ikelite has a big wide hood for my camera lens, and with the 20mm lens, I get some shading in the corners. I quite like the effect, but you can crop it out if you want to.

Shoot camera raw

Shoot JPEG and camera raw simultaneously. Swimming pools put a cyan cast on everything, which I'm



No lighting is needed, but choose a sunny day

not a fan of. So after viewing my images, when I find one that looks interesting, I open it in raw and immediately complete some levels adjustments and convert it to black & white using Nik software. After this step, I'll continue to dodge and burn until the image is just right.

Shoot and shoot some more

In swimming pools, I don't use scuba gear. I put on a pair of swim goggles, take a deep breath and go under. In this series, I'm trying to capture that moment when the kids are doing something interesting and their bodies just break the surface. Everything has to be right, but so many things can go wrong. This is why my kit list includes high-capacity storage. I can take 100 photos and have only one with potential.

You need patience and a sense of adventure when you go into the water. Between the movement of the water, the fluidity of the people being photographed, and your own movement as you float, there are many factors that will keep you from capturing what you planned. But the nice surprises can more than make up for the loss of control.

AP

KIT LIST

Ikelite ► scuba housing

I use an Ikelite scuba housing, which can be ordered to fit almost any DSLR perfectly. Virtually every control is available underwater.



Nikon D800 ▼

My camera of choice is a Nikon D800. With a 36.3-million-pixel sensor, it gives sufficient image data to work with.





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LETTER OF THE WEEK

Wideangle pinhole

It is good to see that John Duder is still maintaining his pinhole interest (*Inbox*, AP 18 June). His telephoto pinhole is interesting and simple to make, but the real challenge is to make a wideangle DSLR or mirrorless camera body cap. While 3D printing and laser cutting, mentioned by Richard Sibley in his reply, are beyond the scope and purse of most of us, a wideangle pinhole body cap can be made simply and cheaply if you can use a craft knife, hole saw and scissors. I only had to buy a hole saw because I had everything else.

In my version, a 1.5in hole was cut in a Canon body cap using the hole saw, and three ring-shaped pieces of 5mm foam board were cut and glued. Care should be taken to see that the camera's mirror will clear the assembly. I established that 11mm can safely enter the mirror box of my Canon EOS 600D without being hit by the mirror. The pinhole was made with a sewing needle in brass shim. The size, using Lord Rayleigh's formula, was 0.010in diameter.

After de-burring and polishing, I checked that it was a good clean hole and then measured it. In the past this was done with an enlarger, but I now check holes by scanning them at high resolution and measuring in Photoshop, using the Rectangular Marquee tool and Info. While not strictly wideangle on an APS-C sensor, the angle of view, as seen in the comparison shots (above right), has



Image 'A', taken with the wideangle camera body cap made using home tools, has a greater angle of view compared to image 'B'

increased much more. Of course, used on a full-frame DSLR or a mirrorless camera, (which I do not own), the angle of view will truly be wideangle.

Clifford Brown, Somerset

I never cease to be amazed by the ingenuity of our readers. Good work, Clifford! I'm sure your letter will inspire other readers to try making one of their own – Nigel Atherton, Editor



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Lens to shoot birds

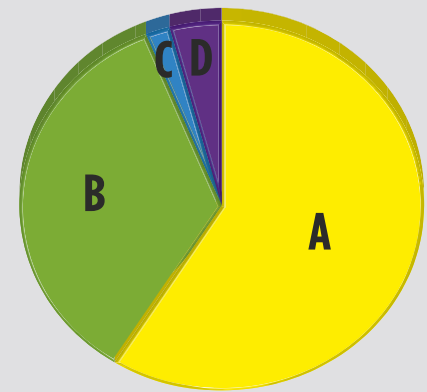
My subject of interest is small garden birds, and I am considering the use of a polarising filter to possibly improve the end results. My equipment comprises two Olympus OM-D E-M10 bodies, one with a 100-300mm lens that is used for handheld work. The second body is used with a Leica 'R' lens, manually focused and mounted on a tripod, and with this I have some control over

light angles and avoid having to use filters. As the filters on the 67mm fit are not cheap, could I have your opinion about using them and would I gain an improvement on image quality?

Dennis Gander, Hertfordshire

It's not immediately clear to me how a polarising filter might help with photographing small birds. The usual problem is

keeping shutter speeds high enough to avoid motion blur, especially if you're using a relatively slow zoom (I'm assuming it's the Panasonic 100-300mm f/4-5.6 OIS). Small birds tend to move quickly, so even with image stabilisation you'll need to keep shutter speeds high – ideally 1/1000sec at the long end of the zoom, given the 600mm equivalent focal length. Adding a



In AP 30 July we asked

Do you ever shoot at wide apertures for shallow depth of field?

You answered...

A Frequently	59%
B Occasionally	36%
C No, because I don't have a fast lens	1%
D No, wide apertures don't suit my photographic style	4%

What you said

'I am doing more and more of my non-landscape photography with minimal depth of field for the conditions.'

'I do occasionally. However, I nearly always use telephoto lenses wide open to keep exposure times low, and accept the shallow depth of field.'

'Yup, and with reverse tilt too sometimes.'

'Very often, but I rarely shoot wide open. Both my fast lenses benefit from being stopped down a tad.'

Join the debate on the AP forum

This week we ask

Do you enjoy photographing your pet?

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Top News stories

What's trending on the AP website



- 1 Record-breaking Astronomy Photographer of the Year reveals its star performers
- 2 Nikon Coolpix W100 targets holidaymakers
- 3 Nikon 105mm f/1.4E ED set for August debut
- 4 Getty set to fight \$1 billion copyright lawsuit
- 5 Big Apple beckons for UK photo retailer after £2m cash boost

➤ **polarising filter will rob you of a couple of stops of light, so you'll need to boost the ISO to compensate, and this will only be detrimental to image quality.**

For best results, I'd recommend setting the focus area size to the smallest possible and placing it over the bird. Keeping shutter speeds high, release the shutter shortly after focusing, and don't be afraid to shoot in burst mode to maximise your chances of getting a good, sharp shot. Use a lens hood and make sure image stabilisation is turned on – Andy Westlake, technical editor

London calling

It was with some disbelief that I read Mr G Durrance's letter (*Inbox*, AP 18 June). He castigates you for omitting London stores from your article on second-hand camera shops, and is upset that he doesn't live in any of the areas listed in the article – Inverness, Colwyn Bay, Leeds and Brighton. He says he 'won't be heading to Wales or Scotland' to look at or purchase photographic equipment. Perhaps Mr Durrance would care to reflect on the fact that the vast majority of UK residents do not

actually live in London; nonetheless, there seems to be an expectation that everybody can go to London for events or to purchase items. Some Londoners seem to be unable to look or venture beyond the M25 circle.

Richard Sibley's reply refers to this as 'that glaring omission', as if it is unthinkable that London was not mentioned.

Neil Scott, Edinburgh

Around one third of the UK population lives within London or its surrounding commuter belt, and our road and rail network emanates from the capital like a spider web. So I agree with Richard, and Mr Durrance, that we should have included at least one retailer within this area.

But this isn't to say that we should neglect the rest of the country, and we try our best to avoid doing so whenever we compile features such as this one – Nigel Atherton, Editor

Minox at the Cold War

With Trident, UK's nuclear defence, in the news as a believed relic of the Cold War, here is something from the archives at MS Hobbies, Minox Specialists (see below). We had a lot of military users in conventional forces back in the day – all taking photos against regulations. This example is from Mr Bailey, one of our oldest customers, and it was taken in 1952.

Paul O'Sullivan, via email



© MS HOBBIES MINOX SPECIALISTS/N BAILEY 1952

This picture, taken by N Bailey, appears on the MS Hobbies archives

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Amateur Photographer, Time Inc (UK) Ltd, Pinehurst 2, Pinehurst Road, Farnborough, Hampshire GU14 7BF

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In next week's issue On sale Tuesday 23 August

Cash from your camera

There are options galore for talented amateur photographers to make money from photography. We show you how



© ROB SANDERSON

EISA 2016-2017 winners

We look at the best cameras and kit of the past 12 months, as voted for by photography magazines across Europe

WhiteWall photo books

Michael Topham tests the latest online lab to offer a photo-book service

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We reveal the winners of round 5 Macro in this year's Amateur Photographer of the Year competition

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Dogs at Play winner

Tom Lowe

UK

Don't forget to make the most of dramatic landscapes for effective dog portraits. The rugged scenery here also perfectly fits the dog's breed, a West Highland white terrier.



© TOM LOWE

A dog's life

It was puppies and paws galore in the tenth Dog Photographer of the Year competition. We take a look at some of our favourite entries

Pets, for time immemorial, have given us great pleasure, whether it's through their loving companionship or their often funny behaviour. It's with that in mind that the Kennel Club set up the Dog Photographer of the Year competition. The event is now in its tenth year, and this year alone received around 13,000 entries from 90 countries.

This year's winner is Anastasia Vetkovskaya from Russia (see top right) who sent in a photo of her dog Sheldon, an English springer spaniel. Anastasia receives a SmugMug business account, as well as a two-day course with professional dog photographer Andy Biggar. She will also receive an oil painting of her image from the artist Sara Abbott.

The winning images will be on show at the Kennel Club in London, until 12 September. The exhibition is free to visit by appointment.



Overall winner
Anastasia
Vetkovskaya
 Russia

➤ Here, in this winning image of an English springer spaniel, we see the real benefit of shooting in the early hours. The mist of the early morning has created a dreamy atmosphere with the low raking light that follows just after sunrise.

© ANASTASIA VETKOVSKAYA



© ROBERT JAMES DRAY



© JAMIE MORGAN

Dogs at Work
2nd place
Robert James
Dray

UK

⬆ Make sure you get down to your dog's level. This dog works for West Midlands Fire Service, and the shoes protect its paws from the heat caused by fires.

Dog Portrait
winner
Jamie Morgan
 UK

◀ Environmental context can do so much to emphasise the physical and emotional character of your dogs. This is a great example showing two Afghan hounds.

© MONIKA MADI



Puppies
3rd place
Monika Madi
UK

⬆️ Monika shot this with an aperture of f/4 at 1/180sec, giving her image a nice shallow depth of field and a real sense of depth. The image also benefits from lovely natural window light spilling into the background.

Oldies
2nd place
Adriana Bernal
Colombia

⬇️ Sometimes the most candid moments can provide excellent results. There's nothing posed or contrived here. It's a simple, quiet moment but it gives us so much. Also note the complementary tones and colours.



© ADRIANA BERNAL

Oldies 3rd place
Jonathan Yearsley
UK

This is such a strong portrait for a couple of reasons. First, the dogs themselves are large domineering presences. In the background we have a simple uncomplicated sky, and that contrasts beautifully the generous portion of grass beneath the subjects. It's simply composed, but all the more effective for it.



© JONATHAN YEARSLEY

Dogs at play 3rd place
Daniel Nygaard
Sweden

To round us off we have this excellent action shot of a Dalmatian on the ice of the Gulf of Bothnia in Sweden. The lens was a Nikon 14-24mm, giving the scene ample coverage and an exposure of 1/1,600sec at f/8 to ensure the perfectly timed image was captured perfectly.



Gone to the dogs

Top dog photographer **Elke Vogelsang** talks tips, tricks and techniques with **Geoff Harris**



What makes a keen amateur take the plunge and turn professional? Each person has their own story, but it's often a major life event that provides the impetus and the 'it's now or never' spur. For German dog photographer Elke Vogelsang, the decision came after her husband became ill.

'My dog photography began with a 365 project on 1 January 2010,' Elke explains. 'I began it as a diary for my husband, who was suffering from a brain haemorrhage. When he collapsed unconscious in the shower that Christmas, it was the dogs that raised the alarm, so we

were able to find him in time. He spent two weeks in a coma and three months with no short-term memory. The project was also a way for me to try to keep up a bit of normality. Fortunately, my husband recovered fully after a few months, but the project lasted much longer.'

Through the project, Elke put her favourite images online. 'This improved my photography and eye for detail enormously,' she says. 'My dogs were my favourite subjects. Until then, I had worked as a freelance translator. But more and more people asked me if I could photograph their dog, too. Stressful times make you think about what you want in life, and that's when I decided to register a business as a photographer and try to spend more time doing what I love.'

Nosing around

While it was a big move, in this case fortune favoured the brave. 'Since 2014, I've been able to live solely on my photography work,' says Elke. 'Frankly, I put much more time into my photography business than I ever put in my translation career, but it's also much more fun.'

Elke is now well known for her 'expressive' pictures of dogs, but this distinctive style came about by accident, rather than design, as she explains: 'There are a lot of photographers who specialise in pet portraiture and lots of young people practising their photographic skills

on their pets. You see technically perfect pictures everywhere, taken in the most beautiful locations with wonderful light. I think it's quite difficult to stand out from the crowd.'

'It all started with me buying a basic camera – one I could always have with me. I had to experiment with its basic functions, overcome the limitations of the short lens and get decent pictures out of it. It sparked my creativity and led to my "Nice Nosing You" series of funny close-up shots of my dogs' snouts.'

Elke was also prepared to get to know each dog as an individual in order to achieve more expressive shots. It wasn't too hard for her to find great subjects.

'My own dogs are rescue dogs, but client dogs come in all breeds and their owners are usually fine about me shooting them in more expressive ways,' she says. 'Some dogs are a lot more expressive than others.'

Pet sounds (and pâté)

Needless to say, tricks, treats and sly techniques play their part in getting the dogs to make such wonderful faces. 'Some dogs react to noises,' Elke notes. 'Then there are dogs that do the cutest head tilts whenever you say a word they recognise. There are also mobile apps with barks and other animal sounds, which are quite effective.'

'Then I go for treats. Nearly all dogs like liver pâté. Put some on their nose or muzzle and they will start licking it off and make funny faces. Toys can also be an option, but a favourite toy sometimes gets them overexcited.'

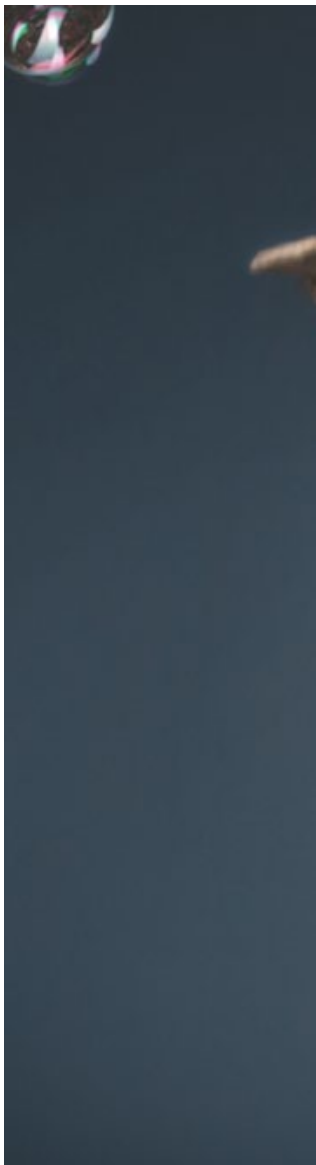
That said, Elke notes there are some very cool canine customers. 'Certain dogs aren't motivated by anything,' she says. 'These are a real challenge. You can hear me trying to make high-pitched and all sorts of other strange noises. It's quite embarrassing sometimes. Some older dogs are just too cool to fall for cheap tricks like this!'

Despite her long experience with man's best friend, Elke doesn't consider herself a dog whisperer. 'My dogs are pampered and spoilt, and are not really role models when it comes to behaving well,' she says. 'But since I've met lots of dogs over the past few years, I guess I have gained some insight into their characters and preferences.'

Keep it simple

When it comes to cameras and lighting, Elke keeps it simple, and favours Fujifilm mirrorless gear

Right: Elke uses selective focus to make the most of a dog's inquisitive nature



Far left: Some dogs do the cutest head tilts when you say a word they recognise

Right: May the paws be with you – try using props, if the dog is happy with them



Below: 'I always put my camera on continuous focusing,' says Elke, 'and keep the focus point on one eye'



over DSLRs. 'My lighting equipment is very basic,' she explains. 'I use a Walimex Pro VE Excellence with three flash heads, but I often use only one flash. I love the reflection of an umbrella in the eyes of my subject, so the main flash is equipped with an umbrella while the other two flashes might have strip lights to provide for a rim light on the fur.'

As for cameras, Elke uses a Fujifilm X-T1 and X-Pro2. 'These cameras are compact and lightweight, and offer high quality and user friendliness,' she says. 'For the quirky dog portraits, I usually use a Fujinon 18mm lens as the wideangle effect gives a bit of distortion. People often think that I use a fisheye lens, but a moderate

wideangle lens already gives a quirky look when up close to the dog's nose. The more elegant portraits are usually taken with a Fujinon 90mm.'

As well as being funny and touching, Elke's dog portraits are wonderfully sharp. She achieves this by sticking with an aperture of around f/9 in the studio, but a wider aperture outdoors.

'If the dog moves its head even slightly, you can lose the focus,' she explains. 'Therefore, I always put my camera on continuous focusing, even for portraits, and keep the focus point on one eye.'

For the backgrounds, Elke favours a dark-grey cardboard backdrop, which she reckons is perfect for every fur colour. 'And I've got a greenish-blue background, which can easily be turned into all kinds of colours in Photoshop,' she says. 'White backgrounds are better for selling the pictures.'

When it comes to processing, Elke favours plug-ins such as those from Nik or Macphun, rather than heavy Photoshop comping.

Essential tips

The main markets for Elke's work are advertising agencies, the pet food and accessory markets, and magazines and newspapers.

'I sell my pictures directly, so I know where they end up,' she adds. 'That's important to me, as I don't want a client's pet being used for an article about aggressive dogs or the horrors of dog poo in parks.'

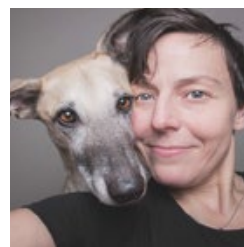
So what are Elke's tips to help us take more interesting and creative dog portraits? 'First, get familiar with the species you want to photograph,' she says. 'Know the behaviour and body language.'

When working with animals, be calm and relaxed. Never hassle an animal to get a shot. Make sure the dog is rewarded often and has fun.

'I often hear people say that their dog doesn't like to be photographed. Usually, that's just because the dog hasn't learned that it can be fun. Then, go down to their eye level.'

Every perspective can be interesting. Shoot portraits in continuous AF mode and keep the AF point on the eye of the dog to accommodate for any movement by you or your subject.

I use a minimum shutter speed of 1/100sec for still dogs, and at least 1/1,000sec for dogs in action. Finally, does your dog have any character traits that make him or her special? Do they know some tricks? Try to find a way to show this in your picture.'



For more information on Elke, visit elkevogelsang.com. Details of her forthcoming workshops in Warwickshire are at bit.ly/dogphotoworkshop

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Transparency of a Dream

by Alexander James

Alexander James discusses the lengthy process behind his surreal image of several generations of butterflies. He explains all to **Jade Severs**

This image is taken from the series 'Transparency of a Dream', where I placed butterflies underwater and photographed them suspended in a dream-like state. When removed from the water they were unharmed. I was inspired to do this project when I was working in Moscow and found out that my estranged father had died and been buried for two years before I'd known about it.

It was this knowledge that triggered the idea of photographing generations of butterflies and was a project that would take two years of my life to complete.

Breeding butterflies

In order to create this surreal sensation of butterfly descendants dancing with one another – something that never occurs in nature – I had the

idea of layering generation upon generation of butterflies within a single transparency. This required me to breed several generations of butterflies over two years.

Starting with a parent butterfly specimen, I captured the original scene on a Sinar 10x8in plate camera, loaded with a single sheet of film. In order to create the effect of the butterfly being suspended in a dreamlike state, in my studio I used a highly scientific process to place the butterfly in a temperature-controlled coma – something that occurs in the wild. I then placed the butterfly in a specially devised tank of cooled water.

The butterfly is tied with a piece of black silk thread and the water gently moves: it is this arrangement that gives the illusion of them dreaming and dancing as they move with the motion of the water.

Capturing the scene required lighting that was handmade in the studio. A butterfly's wing is made up of thousands of light prisms. If you fire a flash directly at them they just reflect white light.

However, the water neutralises these prisms, allowing their full colour depth and luminosity to shine through.

Painting in light

Because of the complexity of the situation, I had to create lighting from aviation-grade aluminium that is very specific to this type of underwater set-up, and which I have been perfecting for 30 years.

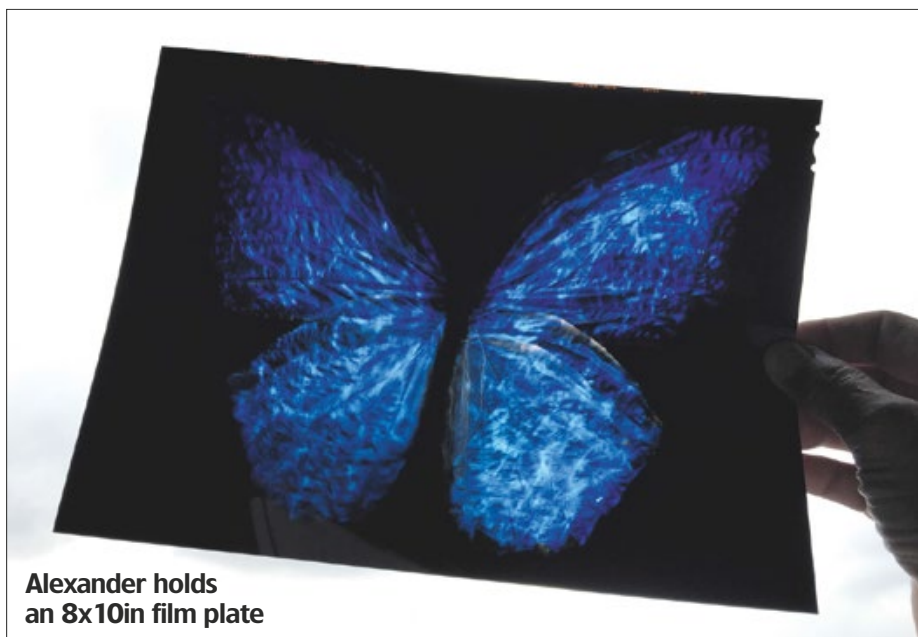
The surface of the water can create a great deal of tension of movement, so the lighting is designed and directed to specifically catch these deviations in liquid mechanics. These movements catch and refract the light onto the subject, which is where the painterly quality of my work comes from: I am literally painting the subject in light.

Overlaying generations

Once the initial parent butterflies had been photographed, the plates were annotated and stored for several months until their offspring were born.

I went through four full cycles of breeding descendants of butterflies. These were then re-shot over the top of the original plates in the same manner, overlaying mother with daughter, father with son and so on.

It was very challenging and of course, had I wanted to, I could just have used some kind of post-production manipulation that I would be able to repeat. However, to me that would be horrific as the




Alexander holds an 8x10in film plate



pictures would no longer be unique. This is why I have produced each plate only as a single-edition print.

This reverses the usual parameters of photographic works. I have taken the

painterly quality of my work into the realms of traditional painting. For this reason, each butterfly piece exists only as a piece of 8x10in acetate and one, single-edition, 160x160cm print. 



Alexander James

London-based photographer Alexander works largely with film techniques and is noted for his resistance to manipulating images in post-production. His work has been exhibited several times, both in solo shows and as part of group exhibitions. To see more of Alexander's work, visit www.distilennui.com.

Capa in colour

While **Robert Capa** is known mainly for his black & white images, he also created a body of colour work. The **Capa in Color** touring exhibition explores this lesser-known work. **Karen Sheard** reports



A skier in front of the Matterhorn, Zermatt, Switzerland, 1950

Ava Gardner on the set of *The Barefoot Contessa*, Tivoli, Italy, 1954



Pablo Picasso playing in the water with his son Claude, Vallauris, France, 1948



ALL PICTURES © ROBERT CAPA/INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY/MAGNUM PHOTOS

Robert Capa is regarded as one of the most respected photojournalists of the 20th century, known especially for his war photography and photojournalism work as correspondent for Magnum Photos. What is perhaps less well known is his colour photography – he used colour regularly from 1941 until his death in 1954. Over the years, much of this colour work has been forgotten, which is why the International Center of Photography's exhibition of his work, called *Capa in Color*, currently on tour worldwide, is of note.

Capa did also use some colour in

his early war photography. In 1938, before it was widely used by other photojournalists, he requested that his agency send 12 rolls of Kodachrome and instructions on how to use it. For the first two years that he covered the Second World War, he carried two cameras – one colour and one black & white – and shot colour images of a number of military operations. But during the mid-1940s he returned to shooting in black & white, partly due to the processing, editing and publishing times that colour required.

His use of colour became more prevalent after the war, during his travels in the late '40s to cover postwar life in the USSR, Budapest,

Humphrey Bogart (left) and Peter Lorre on the set of *Beat the Devil*, Ravello, Italy, April 1953



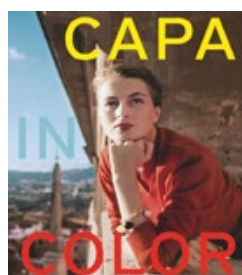
and Israel, and during the '50s, while covering the glamorous lifestyles of fashionable ski resorts and French holiday destinations.

His images from this period, which reflect the glamour and allure of the locations and lifestyles, lent themselves more to the vibrancy of colour photography. During this period he also experimented with fashion photography, and through his friendship with prominent actors of the time he was able to capture intimate moments on a number of European film sets, photographing actors such as Ingrid Bergman, Humphrey Bogart, Orson Welles and John Huston.

It is perhaps proof of Capa's

technical ability that he was able to move so easily between colour and black & white, and adapt to a postwar audience, who were now seeking entertainment and escape.

'Capa's talent with black & white film was extraordinary, and starting colour film halfway through his career required a new discipline, but it also opened up new opportunities,' said ICP curator Cynthia Young, who organised the first showing of the Capa in Color exhibition in 2014. 'The exhibition is also about how Capa reinvents himself as a photographer during the years when he is not covering war and political conflicts. The colour work was very much a part of



Capa in Color will be on show at Círculo de Bellas Artes in Madrid, Spain, from 20 October 2016 to 15 January 2017. You can also buy *Capa in Color*, published by Prestel, priced £40, ISBN 978-3-791-350-0

trying to keep the Magnum agency afloat, because magazines wanted more and more colour in the postwar period.'

Capa in Color is drawn from the Robert Capa Archive in ICP's permanent collection. This contains roughly 4,200 colour transparencies – 35mm Kodachrome, 2¼in Ektachrome and some larger Kodachrome sheet film. It also includes thousands of vintage black & white prints, negatives, tear sheets and papers.

Some of these images were printed in the magazines of the day, such as *Holiday* and *Ladies' Home Journal*, but the majority have never been widely exhibited.





Ben Hall

Ben is recognised as one of Britain's foremost professional wildlife photographers. He has won multiple awards, including more than 20 in the British Wildlife Photography Awards. He has also appeared on numerous radio and television programmes.

www.benhallphotography.com

Flying **high**

Capturing birds in flight is not always easy, but with just a few tips from wildlife photographer **Ben Hall**, you're sure to crack those sought-after shots



KIT LIST



▲ Gimbal tripod head

For lenses of 500mm upwards, a gimbal tripod head is an essential piece of kit. It will allow precise and fluid panning in any direction while taking all the weight (and much of the shake) out of the lens. There are cheaper alternatives available, but the Wimberley brand is favoured by most professionals. While not cheap, the build quality is fantastic and it should last a lifetime.



A fast lens

▲ If you are serious about flight photography – or anything action-based, for that matter – lenses that open up to an aperture of f/4 or larger are worth the investment. They tend to focus faster, and by allowing more light into the lens, shutter speeds can be increased, thereby providing a greater success rate.

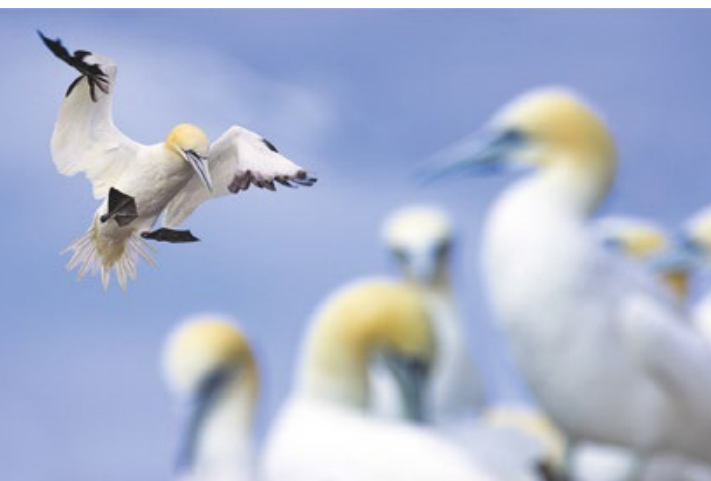
The graceful shape and form of birds appear at their most spectacular when they are in full flight. Their movements can be fast and unpredictable, so it comes as no surprise that for most people, the ability to capture the beauty of flight is regarded as one of the prime benchmarks in wildlife photography. Thankfully, recent advances in technology such as faster and more

accurate focusing systems have made the task easier, but to obtain a successful result still requires plentiful use of the skills of old – patience and perseverance!

When it comes to choosing the right gear, fast lenses with wide apertures are the most suitable, as they tend to focus more quickly, and the greater light transmission allows faster shutter speeds. This is important if the objective of the

photograph is to freeze the movements of a bird. Depending on the distance from the subject, focal lengths ranging from 200mm to 500mm are ideal. For flight photography I prefer prime lenses such as the 300mm f/2.8, as the autofocus is precise and quick to react. When it comes to zoom lenses, the 70-200mm f/2.8 is also a good choice, provided your subject is within range. When using





A gannet coming in to land with a group in the foreground. Taken on Bass Rock, Firth of Forth

➤ lenses of up to 400mm focal length, I find it easier to handhold as this allows a greater freedom of movement and makes fine-tuning the composition easier. As a general rule, I like to keep the shutter speed to a minimum of 1/800sec for a slow to medium-speed bird. For smaller, faster flying birds, shutter speeds of 1/1,000sec and above will usually be needed to ensure a pin-sharp result.

Panning and focusing

Regardless of the particular bird, effectively capturing a moving subject will require a solid panning technique. The keys to successful panning are smoothness and anticipation. To adopt the correct stance, stand with your feet shoulder-width apart with your elbows tucked in to your side for added stability. As you follow the bird, swivel the upper half of your body in one smooth motion. I prefer to keep my camera set to its high-speed drive mode and fire a rapid sequence of frames. For this reason, cameras with a fast frame rate are much more suited to flight photography, but that doesn't mean you cannot still get excellent results from a slower camera with the correct technique.

When setting the focus, switch to predictive mode. This will allow the lens to constantly re-adjust and track your subject as your finger is held down. Under these circumstances, the most challenging part for the photographer is to keep the focusing point on the bird as you pan.

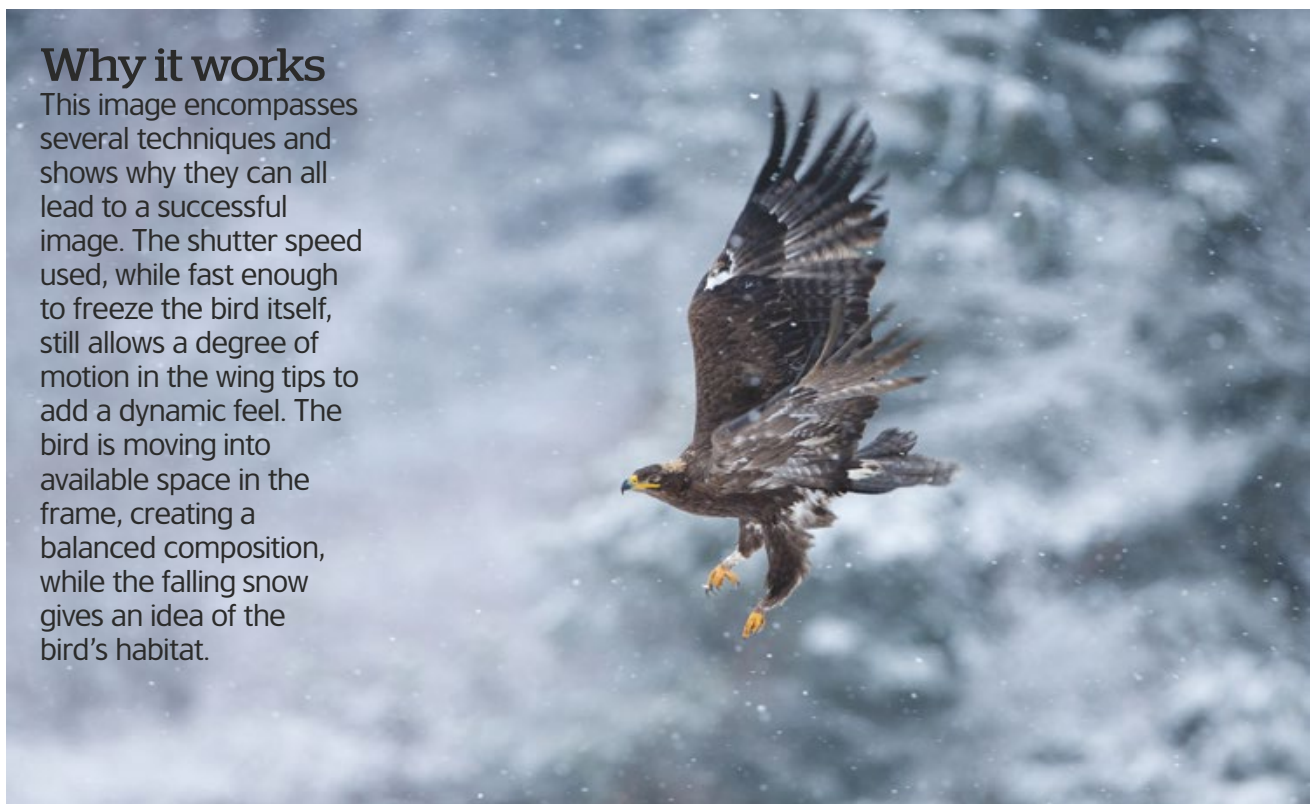
I prefer to expand the camera's focusing area so that I have nine active autofocus points showing in the viewfinder. The centre point is the primary focus point, with the surrounding points acting as helpers. This gives me a greater focusing area and makes it easier to hold it on the flying bird, thus preventing the autofocus from jumping to the background. In this mode, the centre point is the most accurate so I would recommend starting with this, but as you grow more proficient try moving this to one side for a more effective in-camera composition.

Adding some negative space in front of the bird nearly always results in a more effective composition, as you are allowing



Why it works

This image encompasses several techniques and shows why they can all lead to a successful image. The shutter speed used, while fast enough to freeze the bird itself, still allows a degree of motion in the wing tips to add a dynamic feel. The bird is moving into available space in the frame, creating a balanced composition, while the falling snow gives an idea of the bird's habitat.



ALL PICTURES © BEN HALL

Alternatives

Rather than always trying to freeze the movement of your subject, try experimenting occasionally with slow shutter speeds to create a motion-blur effect, particularly in low-light situations. For this technique, switch to shutter priority mode and try out a variety of exposures. I find between 1/15sec and 1/60sec works well, but it all depends on the speed of your chosen subject. The key is to experiment as much as possible – and take plenty of shots! When done well, the effects of a slow exposure can result in an artistic impression of your subject, even bordering on abstract. Colour is important for this style of image; backlighting can create a beautiful golden glow and give your shots extra impact.

‘Backlighting can infuse your images with an extra sense of beauty and drama, and create a wonderful effect’

space within the frame into which the subject is moving. The major exception to this rule occurs when the bird is flying directly towards the camera. In this case, a central composition will better highlight the symmetrical nature of the image.

Playing with light

Light will, as always, play a crucial role in your success. When the sun is low in the sky, it can light up the underside of the bird, which tends to reveal important feather detail. Getting the right exposure, though, can be tricky when your subject is flying against the sky. You will likely need to dial in a good amount of positive exposure compensation. Typically, I start at +2 stops and then check the histogram. For the best-quality image possible, ensure that the histogram is pushed as far

to the right as possible without clipping the highlights, so you are recording the maximum amount of detail, and your files will be larger as a result.

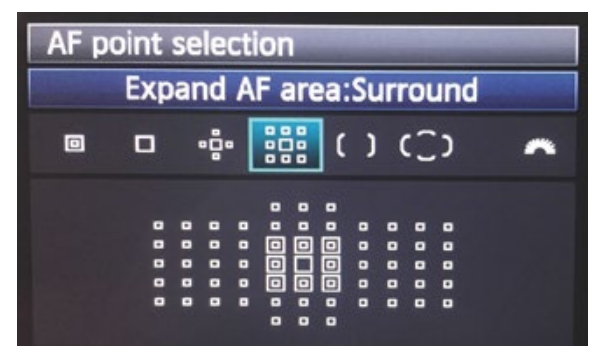
Don't be afraid to shoot towards the sun. Backlighting can infuse your images with an extra sense of beauty and drama, and create a wonderful effect. Shooting against the sun must be done early or late in the day, when the sun is close to the horizon, and if done correctly, it can yield truly spectacular results. In this situation, always watch carefully for rim lighting. This occurs when the sun is directly behind the subject. A halo of light will surround the bird, accentuating its shape and form. This often coincides with the light burning through the wing and tail feathers, highlighting the true beauty of a bird in flight.

BEN'S TOP TIPS



1 Switch your camera to predictive focus

For Canon users this is AI servo, while for Nikon it is AF-C. When depressing the shutter button, hold it down and the lens will constantly re-adjust its focus, keeping the subject sharp. You will need to pan carefully and accurately to keep the focus points on the bird, as these areas will really make or break an image.



2 Expand your focusing area

By expanding the active focusing area in your viewfinder, you are giving yourself a larger margin of error. It will be much easier for you to keep a larger area on the bird and the autofocus is less likely to switch to the background, which could lead to a frustratingly missed opportunity.



3 Keep a close eye on exposure

If a large proportion of the frame is taken up by light tones such as the sky, you will need to dial in some positive exposure compensation. As a general rule, when shooting against the sky, start at +2 stops and check the histogram. By exposing towards the right, you are retaining maximum detail which will ultimately result in a larger file size and a higher-quality image.

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David Bailey

Although **Bailey** was initially brusque, shooting his portrait ended up a pleasure, says **Harry Borden**

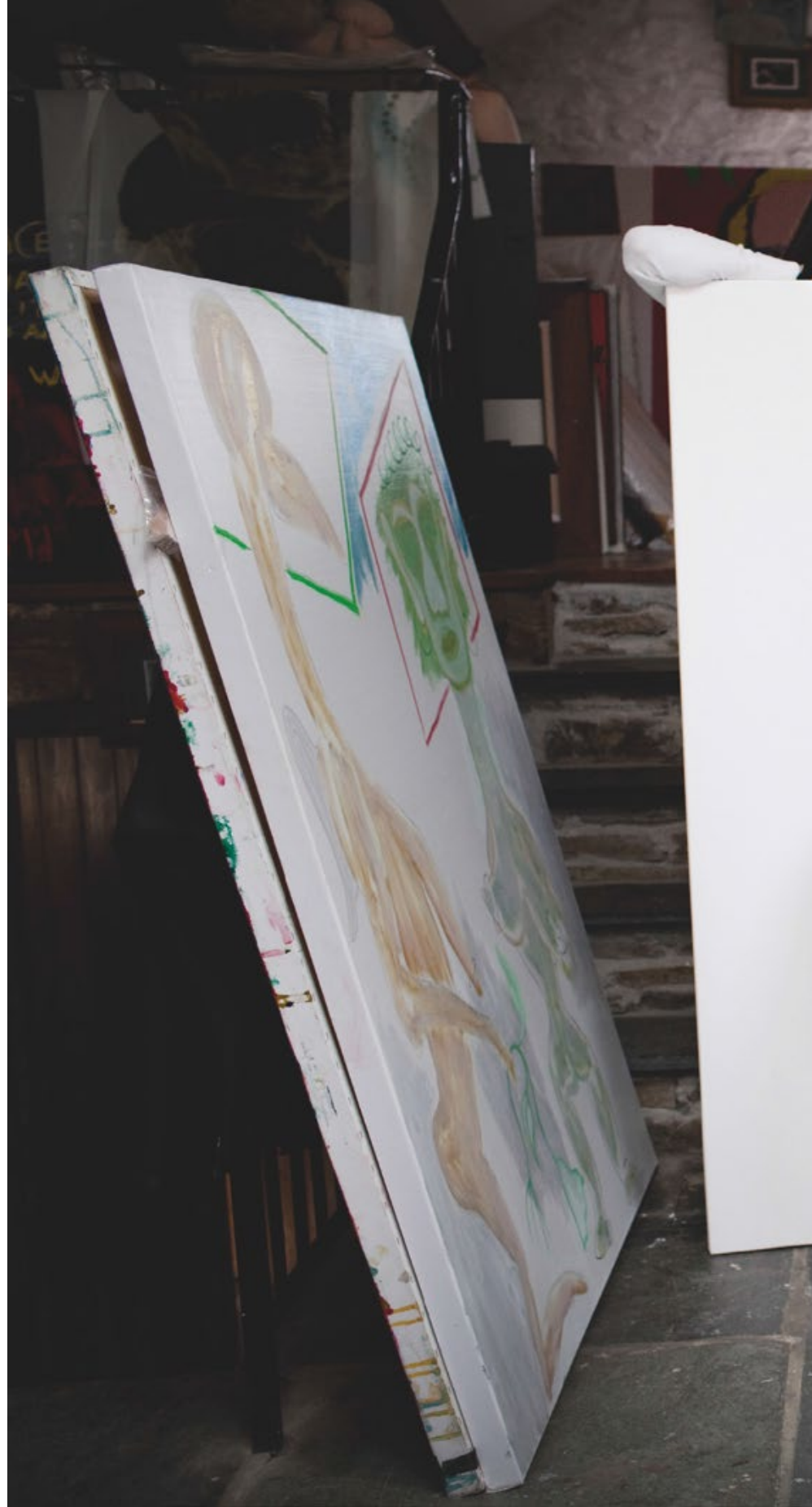
For me, David Bailey is one of the 'Holy Trinity' of living British photographers, along with Don McCullin and Martin Parr. They're very different in style, approach and subject matter, but are great photographers. Memorable portraits of great photographers are rare, and my favourite picture of the young Bailey was taken in the early 1960s by Terry O'Neill. It shows him striking a pose as he directs a model during a fashion shoot.

In August 2011, I was commissioned to photograph a 73-year-old Bailey for *The Sunday Times*, which was publishing an interview with him by journalist Lynn Barber. Bailey was talking to her about an exhibition of his paintings that was being held at a London gallery. It was agreed that we would do the shoot at

his farmhouse in Devon, on the edge of Dartmoor.

I drove down with my assistant Emily, and had a slight feeling of trepidation at the thought of shooting Bailey's portrait. However, I wasn't as intimidated as some people I know who have photographed him because his photographic heroes – people such as Irving Penn and Richard Avedon – are my heroes, too. We also had a professional link, because at the beginning of my career I had assisted John Swannell, who, many years earlier, had assisted Bailey.

When we arrived, things didn't get off to a good start. Bailey was initially quite brusque and defensive, so I decided not to take pictures straightaway. Instead, Emily and I, together with Bailey and his wife Catherine, sat in the kitchen for quite a long time and talked about our



'Bailey can be quite a difficult character, but here he's looking a little embattled'

photographic heroes. He was dismissive of most of today's photographers, but very knowledgeable and a real enthusiast for the medium.

During the conversation, he really warmed to us and became much more friendly, I think partly because he could see that I share his enthusiasm for photography. After this, it became a very pleasant shoot and he was making wisecracks throughout. He was generous with his time and over the next hour and a half I shot nearly 300 pictures. When it was time

to leave, he kindly asked if we wanted to stay the night.

I like to improvise, so we tried out different locations around the house and garden, including Bailey's darkroom. His house is beautiful, full of attractive objects, and has lots of art on the walls. He had a camera with him during the shoot and at times was taking pictures of me while I was photographing him. Then, we decided to take some pictures in the converted barn where he has his painting studio.

I prefer to use natural light



An alternative portrait of Bailey taken in his personal darkroom



and this room had plenty of daylight coming in from a roof window. The room was filled with various canvases, easels and paint pots. Despite the disorder, it seemed a good place to shoot. I quite like the idea that you can have a portrait that's cluttered, because it's more interesting and more akin to real life. Then, if you have an area within that frame where things are clear, that tends to be where the viewer's eye goes.

I asked Bailey to sit on a chair. I found a blank white canvas and roughly propped it up behind him. This created a frame within the frame. His Jack Russell terrier, named

Pig, sat on his lap. I don't think I asked Catherine to be in the shot; maybe she was just holding the canvas in place, but when I saw her through the viewfinder, I felt she added another important element to the picture.

I took the picture with my Canon EOS 5D Mark II. I used a 35mm f/1.4 L-series lens, rather than my preferred 50mm, because I couldn't get far enough back in the room. I only used natural light and the settings were 1/50sec at f/3.5, ISO 320.

I took a number of shots of this scene, including close-ups and one with Pig yawning, but I liked this one the most. Bailey

can be a quite a difficult character, but here he's looking a little embattled and his body language is slightly defensive. There's something childlike about him and, at heart, he's a dyslexic boy fighting his corner. This picture was published over a double-page spread in *The Sunday Times* and it's the only one from the shoot that's been seen until now.

After the shoot, I sent Bailey a print of the main picture, hoping that he may dig out a shot he had taken while I was photographing him, so I'd have a Bailey portrait of me. I never heard back from him, unfortunately. Nevertheless, it was great meeting him and I look back on it as a really memorable shoot.

As told to David Clark

AP



Harry Borden

Harry is one of the UK's finest portrait photographers and his work has been widely published. He has won prizes at the World Press Photo awards (1997 and 1999), and was awarded an Honorary Fellowship by the RPS in 2014. The National Portrait Gallery collection holds more than 100 of his images. Visit www.harryborden.co.uk



Appraisal

Expert advice and tips on improving your photography from **Damien Demolder**



Lake at dawn Amri Arfianto Fujifilm X-T1, 10-24mm, 28secs at f/22, ISO 200

WE DON'T think twice about accepting fiction in art forms such as painting, films and writing, but when it comes to photography, many of us expect some sort of truth. Photography can be truth, and it is very good at it, but it can also be a dreamy romanticism of reality or a blatant fabrication of events. Truth, 'enhanced' truth or untruth – it doesn't really matter, so long as we understand the status of what we are looking at and the photographer isn't actively lying to the audience.

Amri's picture is, I suspect, a version of the truth that has rather more colour than could be seen by the naked eye. However, nature is

genuinely wondrous, and as such it is difficult for any of us who weren't at this place at the same time of day and year as Amri to know whether the scene could have looked like this or not. If the scene did look this way, the challenge is to convince people that what they are assuming to be a fabrication is actually just an amazing display of nature.

Either way, this is an effective picture, and the colours, whether true or not, certainly grab the attention. What spoils it for me, though, is that the lead-in lines from the bottom corners take us into the centre of the frame, where there is a tree that disappears into the

mountains on the opposite bank. Amri leads us to something, but won't show us what it is when we get there.

This is a difficult situation and from the comfort of my desk it is easy for me to identify that had Amri had the presence of mind to take his stepladder with him that morning, a higher angle would have allowed all the branches to be silhouetted against the water. With that extra height, there would have been some separation between the tree and the mountains, so it would have stood out.

The dramatic colours are very nice and all very well, but the picture is missing its subject.



Win! Send up to six prints, slides or images on CD (include the original files from the camera along with your versions on the CD). Tell us about the pictures and include details of equipment used and exposure settings. Send your images to *Appraisal* at the address on page 20. Enclose an SAE if you want them returned. The picture of the week will receive a year's digital subscription to AP worth £79.99

Submit your images

Please see the 'Send us your pictures' section on page 3 for details or visit www.amateurphotographer.co.uk

Father Jacob Elwood

Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 50mm,
1/40sec at f/5, ISO 250

I HAVE a pile of flashguns and studio flash heads, and they are fabulous for creating drama and directing light, but you can't beat natural daylight for lighting up a face. It is free and it comes in a multitude of qualities and directions. All you have to do is match the quality to the subject matter and find the best direction for the kind of picture you want to make.

Jacob has made excellent use of some soft diffused daylight falling on his father's face. The light is coming from behind the camera, and it's slightly to one side, so one half of the subject's face is brighter than the other – which creates depth and a three-dimensional effect. The light really works well here, and the subject is lit in a way that creates highlights and shadows, but without too much deep black or blown-out highlights.

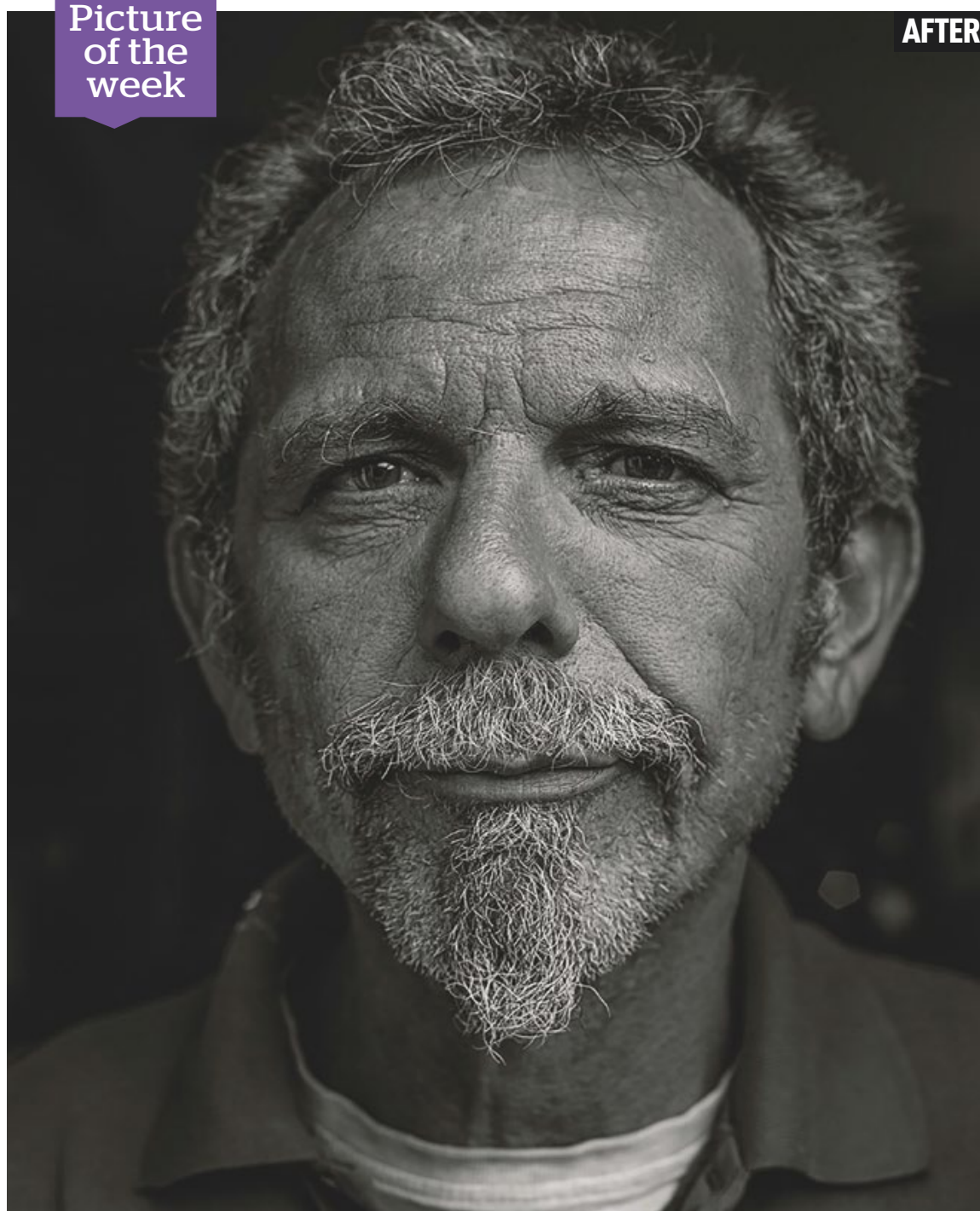
Although Jacob has done a great job already, I wanted to see what the shot would look like with even less contrast, so I lifted the shadows a little and pulled down the highlights to create a softer feel. We still have that 3D effect, but it is slightly less harsh and a bit more revealing.

I felt there was too much space above the subject's head, so I cropped the 3:2 frame to 4:3, then added a moderate warm tone.

It's a lovely picture, Jacob, so keep using that daylight, but don't feel all your pictures need to follow the proportions of your camera's sensor. You win my Picture of the Week award – well done.



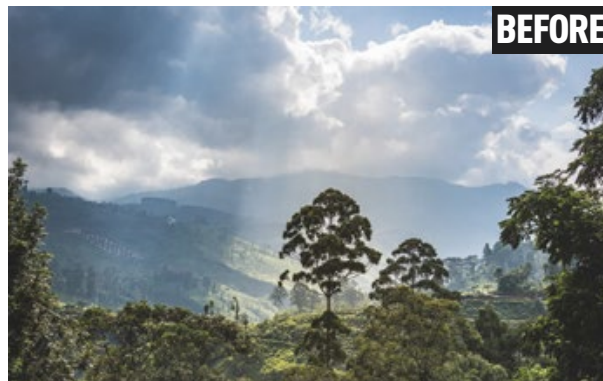
The original image was shot on the sensor's 3:2 ratio



The image has been cropped to a 4:3 format, and the contrast reduced to reveal more detail



The cropped version brings attention to the tree



Light and shade

Eric Begbie

Nikon D810, 28-300mm, 1/640sec at
f/13, ISO 400

WHAT a lovely tree Eric has spotted. It has a beautiful shape that he's done well to emphasise by placing it in an area with a nice clean background. There is a good space

above the top of the tree and the base is about as visible as we could hope, but there is also a lot of space to the left and the right that I'm not sure adds a great deal. I quite like the bookend effect of the tall trees at the right and left of the frame, but they are cut off enough that we can't be absolutely certain that Eric intended them to be in the picture.

The most interesting part of the picture is the central tree and the beam of sunlight that's picked out in the atmospheric haze, so that is what I have concentrated on with my upright version of the shot. I'd have liked to have more of the bookend trees, but in their current state I feel it is better to lose them entirely and to add some local contrast to the midtones to bring out the sunbeam a little more.

This is a wonderful view, and while there isn't too much wrong with the way Eric has composed it, I think we all need a level of visual certainty to make us feel relaxed and comfortable enough to enjoy the scene.

Damien Demolder is a photographer, journalist and photographic equipment expert, speaker, judge and educator. He has worked in the photographic publishing industry for 17 years, including 15 years at *Amateur Photographer*. He uses a wide range of equipment, from wooden plate cameras to the latest DSLRs, and is a great fan of all products that make good photography more accessible to more people

Accessories

Useful gadgets to enhance your photography, from phones to filters...

Manfrotto Pro Light RedBee-210 Backpack

£89 • www.manfrotto.co.uk

Matt Golowczynski takes a look at one of Manfrotto's latest pro-oriented backpacks



At a glance

- Backpack designed to fit two pro bodies and up to eight lenses
- Water-repellent cover included
- Separate laptop and tablet compartments

MANFROTTO aims the RedBee-210 at pro photographers, specifically those who have two bodies to carry, one of which is attached to a 400mm (or similar) lens. The main compartment can fit a further seven lenses.

The primary dividers are both generously cushioned and slightly rigid, with Velcro-ended straps on hand to keep a telephoto lens down the centre or other items in this area in place.

Users can access the bag's contents through the top part of its front, as well as via separate zippered doors on either side of the bottom section. Alternatively, everything can be accessed at once through the back panel, which can be unzipped and folded back.

The inside of this panel has compartments for both a 15in laptop and a smaller tablet, and additional mesh pockets for smaller accessories. This is all separated from the main compartment with a see-through zippered divider, which ensures that everything stays in place.

The back is generously cushioned, as are the wide shoulder straps around it, and this means it sits very comfortably on the back. It would, however, be nice to see some form of padding on the waist strap as its basic design and narrowness are felt in use.

Verdict

With excellent padding throughout, plenty of internal space and a reasonable price tag, the RedBee-210 is a great option for those wanting to carry a raft of photo kit and computer gear comfortably.



Zip openings

Wide-looped zips allow you to open individual compartments quickly.

Luggage mount
A strap on the rear allows the bag to be mounted on rolling luggage.

Padded base

A well-padded base protects gear at the bottom of the bag.



ALSO CONSIDER

Vanguard Adaptor 48

£79, www.vanguardworld.co.uk
This slimmer option from Vanguard also sports a rear-opening design and space for a laptop.



LowePro Flipside 400 AW

£84, www.lowepro.co.uk
Available in black and green, the rear-opening 400 AW fits a pro DSLR and lens, together with 4-6 additional optics.



Tamrac Corona 20 Backpack

£109, www.intro2020.co.uk
This sling/backpack hybrid option can have its gear accessed from the front or sides and complies with many airlines' carry-on regulations.



Barber Shop Tight Contour leather strap

● €79 (about £66) ● www.barbershopbags.com

The Tight Contour strap is handsome and makes use of high-quality materials



ITALIAN-BASED manufacturer Barber Shop is better known for its stylish photographic bags, but it also carries a sizable collection of straps and other leather accessories. Its products are designed and handmade in Italy, and the company promises that only the finest leathers are used for its straps. The Tight Contour hand strap provides an alternative to more conventional neck straps (which, incidentally, the company has also recently started to provide).

The Tight Contour strap is a small hand strap aimed at DSLR users looking for something more refined than the norm. It's available in dark-brown and grained-brown finishes, although it's the third vegetable-tanned black option on test that visually makes for a better pairing with the average DSLR body. Branding is tastefully subtle, with just a small flash of red, white and blue striped material, and an embossed Barber Shop logo to declare its origins.

The pad that sits against the user's hand is backed by a soft microfibre cloth, and in use this is very comfortable. The strap itself is made of neatly stitched leather, and is reasonably easy to fit and adjust. It comes with a solid-metal tripod bush connector through which the strap is looped, and this is topped with a rubber pad to protect the camera. However, the design of this fitting means that it's not possible to use a tripod when the strap is attached to your camera.

It's worth noting that this type of strap also only really works with cameras that have decent-sized hand grips, so it isn't suitable for smaller mirrorless bodies. It's not exactly cheap, either, but you can really appreciate the difference in quality against more conventional straps that typically blend leather with cheaper fabrics and plastic parts.

Overall, the strap is smart and beautifully made, and as a bonus it comes in very presentable packaging that would make it ideal as a gift.

Matt Golowczynski



The hand pad is leather on one side and microfibre on the other

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Tested

Canon PowerShot G7 X Mark II
Panasonic Lumix DMC-TZ100
Sony Cyber-shot DSC-RX100 IV

Pocket compacts

Cameras with 1in sensors strike an agreeable balance between portability and performance. **Matt Golowczynski** pits three top models against each other

Smartphones may have rendered the simplest point-and-shoot cameras redundant, but if you're willing to spend a little more for a better class of camera you have more options today than ever before. While classic enthusiast lines have continued, newer ranges have fast

become just as respected, and this has helped the format to maintain itself as a credible alternative to interchangeable-lens systems.

Although the shift in focus by manufacturers from lower-end models can partly explain the format's continued appeal, one of the most significant turning points

was the widespread adoption of the 1in CMOS sensor. More than twice as large as the 1/1.7in sensors that were previously employed by many enthusiast cameras, these first surfaced in the Sony Cyber-shot DSC-RX100 back in 2012, a camera so popular that it's still (just about)

available on the high street. Able to produce better image quality than smaller sensors, these have since found their way into many other compact lines.

While critical to a camera's performance, it's not just the choice of sensor that helped the category to stay relevant. Being able to squeeze these sensors into bodies no larger than previous generations of cameras, together with high-performing lenses and a strong focus on physical controls, has

ANATOMY OF A PREMIUM COMPACT CAMERA

THE VAST number of enthusiast compact cameras currently available makes it difficult to define a typical model in terms of its design, although there are a handful of commonalities. Most have sturdier bodies than keenly priced compacts, and many will also offer

more defined rubber-coated grips on their front plates.

Most models incorporate pop-up flashes as opposed to hotshoes for mounting external units, and some also manage to shoehorn in electronic viewfinders, the quality of which has

vastly improved in recent generations.

LCD screens that can tilt in some way are also becoming standard, and touch functionality is gaining prominence, although this perhaps isn't as widely featured here as on other cameras designed with fewer physical controls.

Dials

It's now standard to find two or more physical dials on the top-plate to provide immediate access to exposure mode and exposure compensation, or to function as a command dial.

Viewfinder

While not a universal feature, built-in electronic viewfinders are becoming increasingly common on such cameras.

Control ring

Many enthusiast compacts sport rings around their lenses to regulate aperture, focal length or custom options.

Short zoom lens

Most enthusiast compacts incorporate relatively fast zoom lenses that start at a wideangle and finish at a moderate telephoto length.

Magnesium-alloy body

One advantage over cheaper compacts is the use of harder materials, such as magnesium alloy, for the outer shell.



ensured these cameras can take the place of more advanced systems where required.

Simultaneously, features such as tilting LCD screens and Wi-Fi have broadened their appeal to a younger and more technologically savvy audience, while the inclusion of electronic viewfinders on some models has meant they've stayed in focus among more seasoned users who would not consider buying a model without one.

The three cameras on test here – the Canon PowerShot G7 X Mark II, Panasonic Lumix DMC-TZ100 and Sony Cyber-shot DSC-RX100 IV – are all built around a very similar 1in sensor, but as they come from three different camera stables, they all offer something different.

The benefits

Enthusiast compacts have traditionally attempted to offer much the same control as an interchangeable-lens camera, and as close an imaging performance as possible, in a more pocketable body. The use of increasingly larger sensors has narrowed the image-quality gap between the two, but this also allows for better control over depth of field than would be otherwise possible.

Manufacturers have attempted to bridge the gap between the two systems by bringing many features typically associated with DSLRs to such cameras. This includes raw shooting and control over things like noise reduction, but more recently we've seen in-camera

raw processing and advanced video options trickle down, too. In a bid to underline how capable they are, many manufacturers have also chosen to incorporate the same picture styles, menu architectures and graphic user interfaces across both formats.

Naturally, there are some concessions. Buttons and other controls will typically be smaller and packed more densely on a more compact body, while their more populated sensors will have smaller pixels that will not capture as much light, and will therefore struggle to maintain image quality at higher sensitivities and in darker conditions. Still, for those who want a largely capable camera with them at all times, such trade-offs are usually accepted.

Compact contenders

While more affordable compacts appear to be obvious rivals to such cameras, from the perspective of performance and image quality, small compact system cameras are perhaps considered more realistic alternatives.

This is particularly the case with cameras bundled – or at least, compatible – with collapsible zoom lenses, such as Nikon's 1 J5 and Panasonic's now-retired but similarly sized Lumix DMC-GM1 and GM5. Those willing to sacrifice some portability will have a raft of options to consider, such as the Lumix DMC-GX80, Fujifilm X-E2S and Sony's Alpha 6300. Those happy with a single focal length may consider models like the Fujifilm X100T or Ricoh GR II. ➤

Canon PowerShot G7 X Mark II

● £549

Canon's mid-range update of the G7 X tweaks the formula of its predecessor for the better



1 AF assist lamp 2 Control-ring lever 3 Control ring 4 Zoom lever 5 Power button 6 Mode dial 7 Exposure-compensation dial 8 Microphone 9 Control-dial button 10 Tilting LCD 11 Q button 12 Movie-record button 13 Ring-function selector

THE POWERSHOT G7 X Mark II carries over the same 20.1MP sensor and 24–100mm equivalent f/1.8–2.8 lens as its predecessor, but Canon has furnished the new model with a more up-to-date DIGIC 7 processor. This has boosted burst-shooting rates to 8fps (even in raw, for up to 19 frames), and is also said to reduce noise and retain detail better.

However, unlike the other two models on test here, it doesn't stretch to offering 4K video recording, capturing full HD footage up to 60fps instead. Perhaps more disappointingly, it's also the only one without a built-in viewfinder.

Still, the 3in touchscreen LCD works very well and it's sensitive enough to the touch to be conveniently operated in this way for focus-point and option selection. Autofocus performance is generally sound, typically just a touch slower than the other two models here, but not enough to matter. It does, however, sometimes struggle against low-contrast subjects.

A small rubber grip on the front plate helps make this the best handling of the three models here.

The control dial at the back also speeds up operation, although the raised edge of the LCD gets in the way of its comfortable rotation.

The Image Stabilizer works well to keep stills sharp and videos steady, although images appear to show less detail at the wider end of the lens than in the telephoto region. While exposures in general are fine, the model is more swayed towards underexposure than the other two. This has the effect of retaining more highlight detail in high-contrast scenes, at the expense of shadows.

Images are pleasingly coloured in the standard picture style, with a more noticeable boost to contrast and saturation than the TZ100's files, but not quite as much as that applied by the RX100 IV. Blue skies can be somewhat undersaturated, although this can be remedied with an alternative picture style.

Video quality is less than impressive at the wide end of the lens, and noticeably behind the more advanced systems inside the other two models, but this improves further up the focal range and the zoom moves nice and steadily while recording.

Panasonic Lumix DMC-TZ100

● £549

The first compact to sport a 1in sensor and a 10x optical zoom lens makes a strong impression



1 AF assist lamp 2 Control ring 3 Microphone 4 Flash 5 Mode dial 6 Power switch 7 Zoom collar 8 Shutter-release button 9 Movie-record button 10 Command dial 11 Electronic viewfinder 12 LCD 13 Flash button 14 Q menu button

THE LUMIX DMC-TZ100 is the first pocketable camera of its kind to incorporate a 10x (25–250mm equivalent) lens alongside a 1in, 20.1MP sensor. The downside to this is that its maximum aperture range is f/2.8–5.9, which is considerably slower than the others, but forgivable given the more ambitious zoom range.

Other highlights include 4K video recording and the ability to lift 8MP frames from footage, as well as a 50fps burst option with focus fixed to the first frame. The combination of a 1.166-million-dot electronic viewfinder and a 3in, 1.04-million-dot touchscreen LCD screen are also welcome, with the screen very sensitive to touch and impressively clear in strong light, although the viewfinder is somewhat small and subject to tearing of its detail.

The raised left-hand side of the front plate serves as a grip, although in practice the lack of any rubber or contouring makes it somewhat less successful than the more comfortable alternative found on the G7 X Mark II. However, the control ring around the lens extends out from the body the furthest, which makes

operating it the most pleasing.

The model employs a 49-point contrast-detect AF system for autofocus, with Panasonic's Depth from Defocus technology on board. Its performance against the other two models is strong, finding focus quickly overall but being particularly sensitive when tasked with a poorly lit subject. I also appreciated the Touch Pad AF option, which lets you change the focusing point when using the viewfinder by touching the screen with your thumb, although on such a small body it's hard for your nose not to be also pressed against the screen and confuse the camera.

Of the three cameras, the TZ100 appears to optimise images the least when set to its default capture settings. In many situations, images show less contrast and vibrancy than those from the others, with white balance being less predictable, too. In some scenes, however, such as those with people, this more natural rendition may be preferred. There's plenty of detail in 4K video footage, too, although the zoom itself isn't too steady here and sound quality could be better.

Sony Cyber-shot DSC-RX100 IV

● £760

The fourth model in the popular RX100 series has 4K video and a high-quality pop-up viewfinder



1 AF Assist/self-timer lamp 2 Control ring 3 Mode dial 4 Zoom dial 5 Flash button 6 Flash 7 Viewfinder 8 Microphones 9 Tilting LCD 10 Control dial 11 Movie record button

SONY'S RX100 line has reshaped the enthusiast compact market, and this fourth iteration continues to deliver plenty of functionality inside a diminutive body. The 20.1MP Exmor RS sensor features a stacked design for faster processing, while 4K video, 16fps burst shooting, a tilting 3in screen and a 2.36-million-dot viewfinder show it to be well specified across many areas.

Conversely, the 24-70mm equivalent f/1.8-2.8 lens has the shortest zoom range of the three, which will no doubt put some people off. The RX100 IV is also the only model of the trio not to sport a grip on its front plate – something common to previous RX100 models and which has split opinion, although third-party options do exist.

While the RX100 IV joins the TZ100 in offering an electronic viewfinder, the two are far from alike. It's not just that the 0.39in retractable 2.36million-dot unit of the RX100 IV is larger and higher in resolution, but the feed is more stable and less prone to artefacts, with details in shadows and highlights displayed more clearly.

The LCD pulls away from the

body and tilts in exactly the same way as the G7 X Mark II, and the two also share the same type of control dial on the rear. In isolation, the screen performs very well, although a side-by-side comparison with the other two models on test reveals it to be more prone to noise and artefacts in less-than-ideal light. It's also not quite as clear to see in harsh light as the other two, meaning that you need to either use the viewfinder or cup a hand around its side.

Still, with images, the camera shines. It maintains very good detail and low noise in many scenes where the others start to struggle, and exposures are generally sound. Raw files from the RX100 IV show more saturated colours than those from the other two cameras, and JPEGs are also well coloured and with good contrast on standard settings, although some may find this a little overly so.

Video quality is also excellent, with richly detailed footage and a pleasingly slow and steady zoom for more seamless transitions. The wind filter is very much required, although this does tend to leave footage somewhat trebly.

How they compare

	Canon PowerShot G7 X Mark II	Panasonic Lumix DMC-TZ100	Sony Cyber-shot DSC-RX100 IV
CONNECTIVITY	Wi-Fi with NFC allows remote control from a smart device. Images can even be copied to other PowerShots.	Wi-Fi is built in, but NFC is missing. You can control the camera remotely through the dedicated app.	Both Wi-Fi and NFC are featured, along with one-touch image transfer and app-based remote control.
LCD SCREENS	The 1.04-million-dot, 3in screen pulls away from the body, and tilts upwards and downwards. It's also sensitive to touch.	Unlike the others, the 1.04-million-dot, 3in screen doesn't tilt up or down, but it includes responsive touch functionality.	Sadly, there is no touch functionality, but the screen has a slightly higher resolution than the others and can be tilted like the Canon's.
BATTERY LIFE	Canon states a relatively low 210-shot life for the supplied battery, although you can boost this to 310 images in eco mode.	The TZ100's battery is specified to provide 300 images per charge with the rear display and 260 with the EVF, making it the winner.	Promising 280 shots when using the rear display and 230 with the EVF, the RX100 IV puts in a good performance.
SUMMARY	Unless you really need NFC, which is missing from the TZ100, there's not a great deal to split the three when it comes to connectivity, as all can be remotely controlled from a smart device and have images transferred wirelessly, too. While physical controls are valued on such models, the lack of a touchscreen on the RX100 IV is	nevertheless a shame, while the lack of a tilting display on the TZ100 is somewhat compensated for by its excellent performance outdoors. The PowerShot G7 X Mark II is let down by its battery, although all three offer USB charging, which is useful if you tend to carry a laptop or power bank with you.	

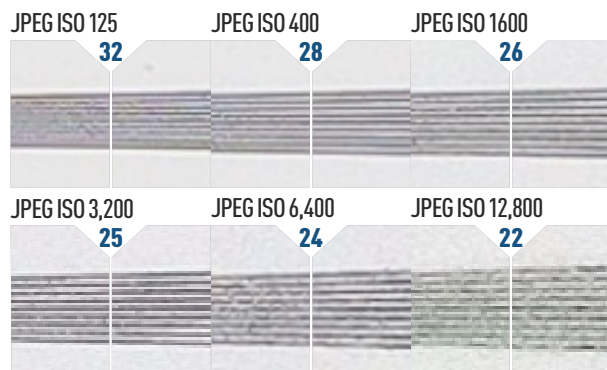
Data file

	Canon PowerShot G7 X Mark II	Panasonic Lumix DMC-TZ100	Sony Cyber-shot DSC-RX100 IV
Sensor	20.1MP, 1in CMOS sensor	20.1MP, 1in MOS type	20.1MP, 1in CMOS
Lens	24-100mm equiv f/1.8-2.8	25-250mm equiv f/2.8-5.9	24-70mm equiv f/1.8-2.8
Output size	5,472x3,648 pixels	5,472x3,648 pixels	5,472x3,648 pixels
Shutter speeds	15-1/2,000sec, bulb	60-1/2,000sec 1-1/16,000sec electronic	30-1/2,000sec 4-1/32,000sec electronic
ISO	125-12,800	125-12,800	125-12,800 80-12,800 expanded
Metering system	Evaluative, centreweighted, spot	Multi, centreweighted, spot	Multi, centreweighted, spot
Exposure comp	±3EV in 1/3steps	+5EV in 1/3EV steps	+3EV in 1/3EV steps
Drive mode	8fps 5.4fps with AF	10fps 5fps with AF tracking	16fps (JPEG) 9fps (raw)
LCD	3in, 1.04-million-dot tilting touchscreen	3in, 1.04-million-dot touchscreen	3in, 1.23-million-dot tilting screen
Viewfinder	None	0.2in, 1.16-million-dot EVF	0.39in, 2.36-million-dot EVF
AF points	31-point contrast-detect AF	49 points	Contrast-detect AF
Video	Full HD (1,920x1,080) 60fps	4K (3,840x2,160) 30fps Full HD (1,920x1,080) 60fps	4K (3,840x2,160) 30fps; Full HD (1,920x1,080) 60fps
Memory card	SD, SDHC, SDXC	SD, SDHC, SDXC	SD, SDHC, SDXC, Memory Stick PRO Duo
Power	NB-13L Rechargeable Li-ion	DMW-BLG10E Rechargeable Li-ion	NP-BX1 Rechargeable Li-ion
Battery life	265 shots	300 shots (LCD), 260 shots (EVF)	280 shots
Dimensions	105.5x60.9x42mm	110.5x64.5x44.3 mm	101.6x58.1x41mm
Weight	319g (with battery and card)	312g (with battery and card)	298g (with battery and card)
Website	www.canon.co.uk	www.panasonic.co.uk	www.sony.co.uk

Canon PowerShot G7 X Mark II

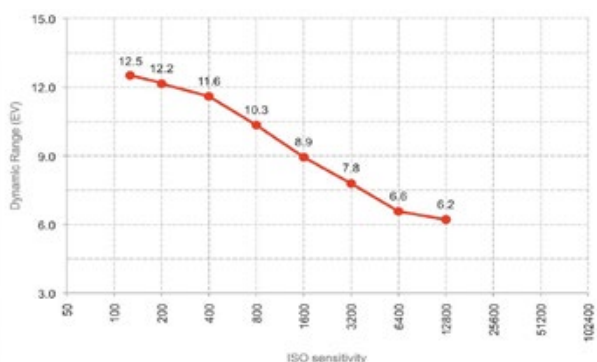
Resolution

The G7X Mark II manages a respectable 3,200lp/ph at its base sensitivity of ISO 125, matching the other two models. This drops to 2,900lp/ph at ISO 200, with ISO 3,200 showing the next big fall to 2,400lp/ph. Results at the higher end of the scale tell a familiar tale, namely that the uppermost ISO 12,800 option is best saved until absolutely necessary.



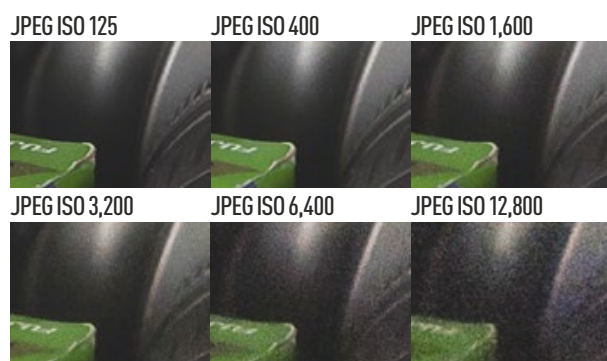
Dynamic range

The G7 X Mark II has a higher base sensitivity than the other two models on test here, but it does a great job of matching the RX100 IV throughout much of its sensitivity range. It slips a behind little after ISO 3,200, recording 6.5EV against the RX100 IV's 7.2EV at ISO 6,400, but things stabilise somewhat at the top setting of ISO 12,800.



Noise

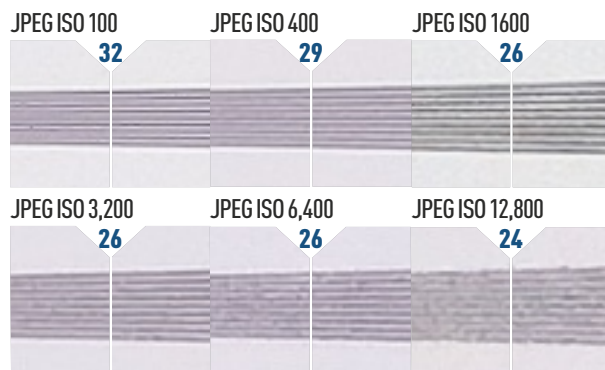
Images throughout the three-figure ISO range are generally clean and noise is kept well in check. Things change at ISO 1,600, but images are still usable at ISO 3,200 with some careful post-processing. While results at ISO 6,400 aren't bad, they are behind the others where discerning fine details is concerned, and this is also true of the highest ISO 12,800 option.



Panasonic Lumix DMC-TZ100

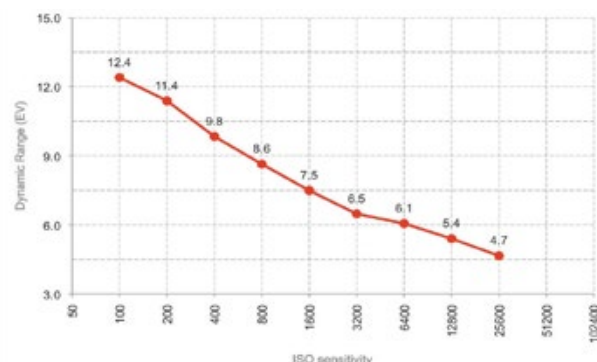
Resolution

The TZ100 does a very good job at its lower ISO settings, recording around 3,200lp/ph just like the others. It also does well to maintain a reading of 2,600lp/ph between ISO 1,600 and 6,400 inclusive, although this is lower than the others. The ISO 12,800 option produces a decent 2,400lp/ph reading, but this drops to 2,000lp/ph at ISO 25,600.



Dynamic range

Our Applied Imaging tests show the TZ100's dynamic range to be pretty much on a par with that of the other cameras at the lowest ISO settings. However, results after this point are consistently lower than the other two, averaging around -1EV lower at most settings, although the difference is smaller at and above ISO 6,400.



Noise

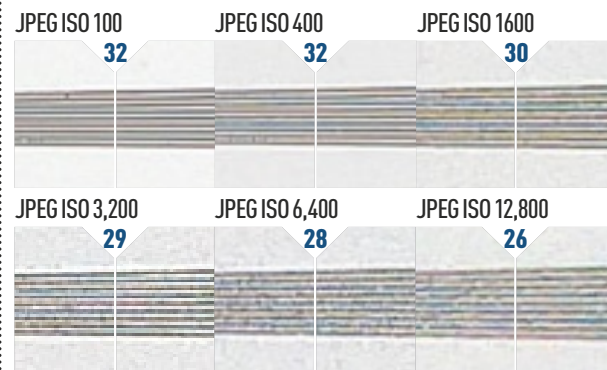
As with the G7 X Mark II, noise is well controlled until around ISO 1,600, and past this point you can retain good detail by carefully processing raw files. Despite heavy noise at ISO 12,800, it's possible to make out finer details in raw files where the PowerShot G7 X Mark II falls down, although noise reduction in JPEGs can be aggressive.



Sony Cyber-shot DSC-RX100 IV

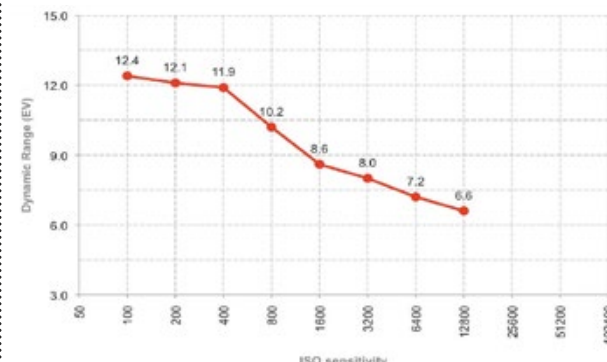
Resolution

Between the extended ISO 80 option and ISO 400 inclusive, the RX100 IV does a remarkable job to keep resolution consistently at 3,200lp/ph. Just as impressive is a figure of 2,800lp/ph at ISO 6,400, where the other two record far less detail, while a reading of ISO 2,600lp/ph at the maximum ISO 12,800 is also top of the pack.



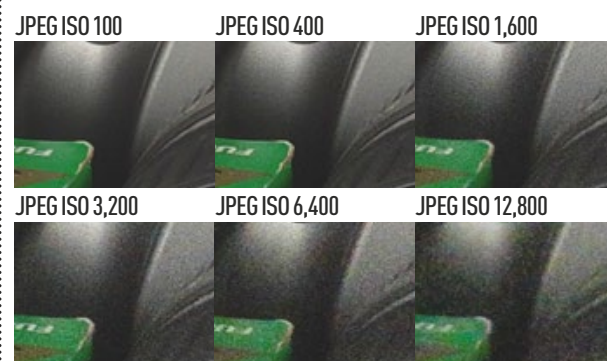
Dynamic range

While lab testing shows the RX100 IV to have the best overall dynamic range performance out of the three, the G7 X Mark II is not far enough behind to make any practical difference. It does very well from ISO 80-400, with 12.4EV at the former and a very respectable 11.8EV at the latter, and results at ISO 6,400 and above are (just) ahead of the others.

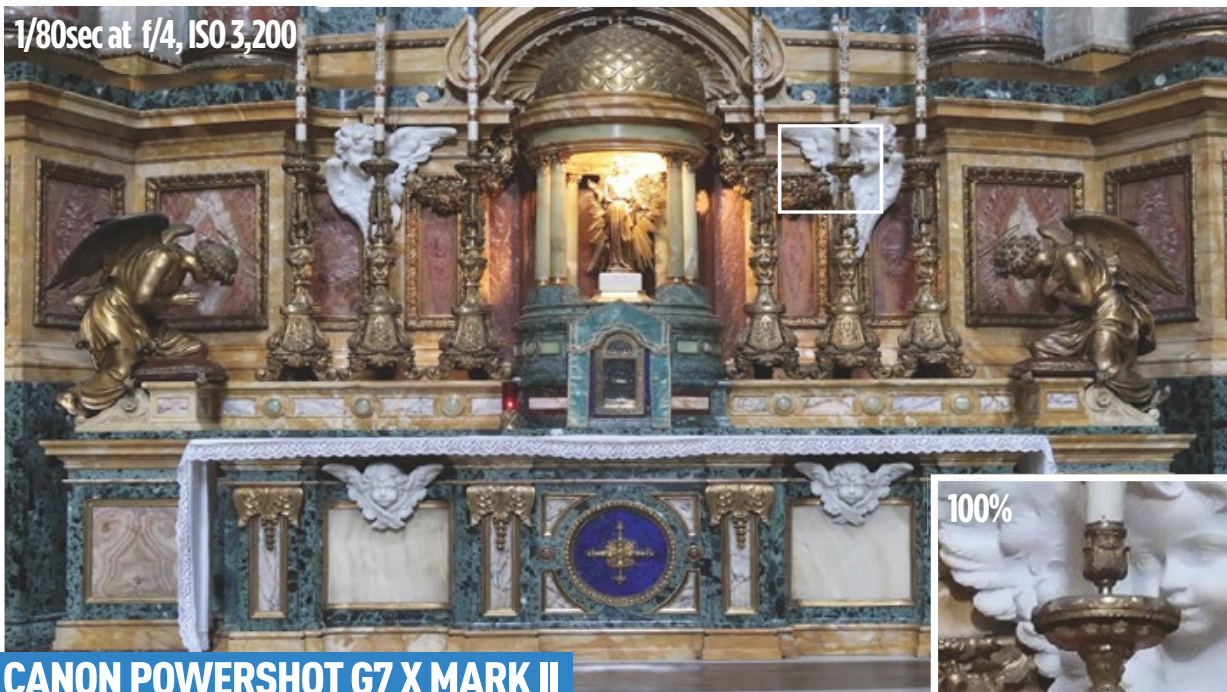


Noise

At low ISOs images are clean and detailed. Noise only starts to be noticeable at around ISO 1600, but even here it's confined to flat, featureless areas and well masked by more detailed parts of the scene. While images at ISO 6400 and above are noisy, it's possible to discern fine detail to a greater degree than it is with files from the other two cameras.



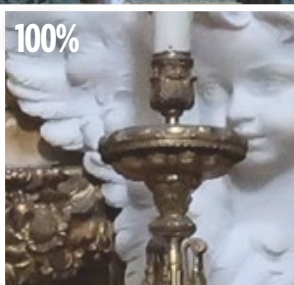
1/80sec at f/4, ISO 3,200



CANON POWERSHOT G7 X MARK II

Canon's JPEG processing gives the most pleasing results straight out of the camera, with saturated colours that are maintained well at high ISO settings

100%



1/40sec at f/4, ISO 3,200



PANASONIC LUMIX DMC-TZ100

The TZ100's slower maximum aperture forces the use of higher ISOs in low light, but image quality is still really quite acceptable at ISO 3,200

100%



1/125sec at f/5.6, ISO 200



SONY CYBER-SHOT DSC-RX100 IV

While the RX100 IV has the shortest zoom range of the trio on test, it gives excellent image quality thanks to its consistently sharp lens

100%



Our verdict

THE MOST obvious conclusion to be drawn from this comparison is the same one that's often found to be the case when three similar models are placed up against each other – namely, that none of the cameras stands out from the other two as the obvious third place. They compete fairly against each other in many respects, but there's much to divide them in what they offer, too.

With a price tag over £200 higher than the other two models, we expect a lot from the RX100 IV – and, in many respects, we get it. A brilliant sensor, a sharp lens, an excellent viewfinder and lovely video quality give it a strong core. The comparatively limited zoom range is its main drawback, and could certainly be a deal-breaker for some photographers. The lack of a touchscreen also places it at a slight disadvantage.

The Lumix TZ100 breaks new ground by offering such an extensive focal range with a large sensor, with very good video quality and an effective image-stabilisation system making a significant difference further up the focal range. While fixed in place, the LCD is excellent outdoors, to the extent that I found it much easier to use in harsh light than the viewfinder. Perhaps the camera's main weakness is its default image output, with images not quite as pleasing to the eye as those from the others on default settings.

In many ways, the PowerShot G7 X Mark II is the opposite of this, with a more restricted lens and no viewfinder, but more pleasing images straight out of the camera. It's perhaps the camera that's suitable for the broadest range of users, and while image quality can sometimes be behind the others, it manages to deliver a competent performance in most key areas.

Overall, while Sony may have enjoyed great success with the RX100 series to date, the strong performance from the other two models shows just how well rivals have done to catch up, or at the very least offer a credible alternative at a much keener price. If price isn't taken into consideration then the RX100 IV sits in top position, but for many people the other two cameras will no doubt be more suitable when everything from needs and desires to budget are factored in.

**Amateur
Photographer
Testbench
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★★★★★



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With its premium optics, Sony's 50mm f/1.4 resolves huge amounts of detail across the entire frame. This image was shot at 1/200sec, f/11, ISO 100



Sony Planar T* FE 50mm f/1.4 ZA

Andy Westlake tries out **Sony's** latest premium fast prime designed for Alpha 7 users

Back in 2006, Sony took over Konica Minolta's troubled camera business in a bid to become a major player in the market. Ten years on and its relentless experimentation and innovation have paid dividends, with the Alpha 7 full-frame mirrorless system rapidly establishing itself as a serious alternative to high-end DSLRs.

There's no point having hugely ambitious cameras like the 42.4-million-pixel Alpha 7R II, though, without lenses to match. To this end, Sony has also been rapidly building up its full-frame FE range, which, from a standing start in 2013, now numbers 17 lenses as well

as various converters. Its latest is the premium Zeiss-branded Planar T* FE 50mm f/1.4 ZA.

Sony's marketing tagline is 'Tomorrow's lenses today', and by this it means that it is designing optics to satisfy the requirements of not just the latest high-resolution sensors, but future generations as well. To this end, it has established a couple of premium lines, with its home-grown 'G Master' range exemplified by the recent FE 85mm f/1.4 GM. Somewhat confusingly, the line developed in partnership with Zeiss is essentially parallel, but the lenses have a specific balance of optical properties.

Whatever the design intention, it's impossible

to miss the new 50mm's price. At £1,499, it's more than double that of the existing Sonnar T* FE 55mm f/1.8 ZA, which, at around £620, is already very much a premium lens and has gained an enviable reputation for optical quality. In context, Sigma's stunning 50mm f/1.4 DG HSM | Art for full-frame DSLRs is currently around £580, while Samyang's new, directly competing FE-fit 50mm f/1.4 will cost just £449. So how can Sony conceivably justify such a wallet-busting price tag?

Features

One clue to Sony's intentions is the optical design; with 12 elements in nine groups, this is unusually complex for a 50mm prime. Indeed, while Sony designates it as a refined Planar-type lens, its optical formula has strayed almost unrecognisably from the classic



Shot wide open at f/1.4, the lens achieves an impressive balance of sharpness and attractive background blur. This image was shot at 1/500sec, f/1.4, ISO 200



symmetric double Gauss implied by the name. It includes an advanced aspheric element, which Sony claims has an exceptionally fine surface tolerance of just 0.01µm in a bid to improve the rendition of out-of-focus areas, while providing the sharpest possible image from the centre to the corners of the frame. Also on board are an additional aspheric element and an ED glass element to maximise contrast, reduce chromatic aberration and suppress distortion.

Sony has also included an 11-bladed diaphragm that's designed to keep the aperture as close to circular as possible, and in turn keep out-of-focus highlights circular. Look into the front of the lens as you stop down and it's clear that this serves its purpose admirably.

At the front of the lens is a large 72mm filter thread that doesn't rotate on focusing, along with a bayonet mount for the deep petal-type hood. When not in use, the hood can be reversed snugly around the barrel, but in this position it does block the manual-focus ring almost entirely. The minimum focus distance is 45cm, which is fairly typical for its class, but like all other full-frame 50mm f/1.4 designs there's no optical stabilisation.

Build and handling

Measuring 83.5mm in diameter and 108mm in length while weighing in at 778g, the FE 50mm f/1.4 follows the current fashion of making large lenses with high-quality optics. In this respect, it resembles the Sigma 50mm f/1.4 DG HSM | Art and the Zeiss Milvus 50mm f/1.4, although all three use very different optical designs. While this bulk won't go unnoticed when you're shooting, the lens isn't awkward to use on the Alpha 7R II body I

used for testing, and I doubt it will find its way onto smaller APS-C bodies very often.

In terms of design, the lens is broadly similar to Sony's existing FE 35mm f/1.4 ZA. Its barrel maintains the same diameter along most of its length, and it is encircled by a broad manual-focus ring at the front with an aperture ring closer to the camera body. Immediately behind the aperture ring, the barrel tapers dramatically towards the mount – a design that's necessary to give your fingers space to wrap around the handgrips of the relatively small Alpha 7 bodies. The build quality is impeccable, with a robust-feeling metal barrel, and dust- and splash-proof construction.

Still photographers will be pleased to find that the aperture ring has detents at 1/3-stop increments, from f/1.4 to its minimum setting of f/16. In terms of feel they're just right, being neither too loose nor overly stiff. There's also

an 'A' position that passes aperture control to the camera body, allowing you to use its electronic dials if you prefer, as with other lenses. Videographers will be pleased to find a switch on the barrel that allows the aperture ring to be declicked, allowing continuous, silent adjustments to its setting.

Focusing

Focusing employs a ring-type ultrasonic motor to drive the large and heavy focus group, with auto or manual focus selected by a switch on the side of the barrel. On the Alpha 7R II, I found autofocus to be quiet but not especially fast, with a very noticeable 'wobble' back and forwards before settling on the subject. Focus speed also slows down progressively as you choose smaller apertures, especially in marginal light, due to Sony's habit of always stopping the lens down to the taking aperture

The 50mm focal length gives a very natural perspective



for focusing. Crucially, though, AF was consistently accurate, even when shooting off-centre subjects with the aperture wide open. This reliability is typical of mirrorless systems, which always use the main image sensor to determine correct focus, and is not necessarily always matched by DSLRs.

Manual focus is by wire, with the smoothly rotating focus ring used to drive the AF motor, rather than being mechanically coupled to the focus group. This isn't necessarily the most tactile means of focusing, but it works well enough and is very accurate, especially as turning the focus ring will automatically switch the viewfinder to magnified view. But I really can't see why Sony couldn't have used a design similar to the FE 90mm f/2.8 Macro, where pulling the focus ring towards the camera effectively emulates an old manual-focus lens, with a distance scale and hard end-stops at the ends of its travel. It would be far more fitting to a lens of this price.

Image quality

If you're going to be spending £1,500 on a lens, clearly you'll have pretty high hopes in terms of image quality. But even so, you may not be quite prepared for the beauties in store when you first come to look at images from this Sony 50mm. It achieves a barely believable combination of cross-frame sharpness with gorgeous-looking out-of-focus blur, essentially regardless of aperture or focus distance. Indeed, few lenses come close to resolving as much detail across the frame from corner to corner when used at f/1.4.

Lateral chromatic aberration is exceptionally low, with just a hint of red and cyan fringing at the corners of the frame if you turn off in-camera compensation and then go searching for it. However, raw files contain profile information for correcting this, which is automatically applied by both Adobe's and Sony's own software. More impressively, there's barely any colour fringing in out-of-focus regions due to longitudinal chromatic aberration, which is much harder to suppress in post-processing. Combined with the accurate autofocus, this means that images consistently come out looking near-perfectly clean and sharp.

Rectilinear distortion is, to all intents and purposes, invisible, even in uncorrected raw files. Indeed, the closest thing the lens has to a technical flaw is vignetting at large apertures, but you'll get that with any f/1.4 prime.

Personally, I find it adds character to most shots, and is key to the distinctive aesthetic of selective-focus shooting. But it's easy enough to remove in post-processing if you don't like it.

All this optical excellence means that the lens's images are highly amenable to further manipulation – for example, they can be heavily cropped without losing integrity. The stunning sharpness also helps when shooting at high ISO sensitivities, as noise-reduction systems have more real detail to work with. Sony's claims that the lens will hold up to sensors with even higher resolutions also appear to be well founded.



This portrait is cropped akin to shooting on APS-C

Our verdict

It's always a little difficult to critically assess a lens this good. Like Sony's recent FE 85mm f/1.4 GM, its optical characteristics are so close to perfect that all we can sensibly do is admire the pictures it creates. If you're prone to nitpicking high-resolution image files at 100% view on-screen, then maybe you'll find something to complain about, but it seems to me that this kind of assessment has become rather divorced from any sensible process of image making.

However, it's impossible to ignore the associated costs of this optical excellence: not just in terms of money, but also size and weight. This is especially true in the context of building up a system: put together, Sony's 35mm, 50mm and 85mm f/1.4 primes weigh over 2.2kg and cost £4,200. So, while this FE 50mm f/1.4 ZA is undeniably superb, sadly only the most committed of photographers will ever get to enjoy it.



Data file

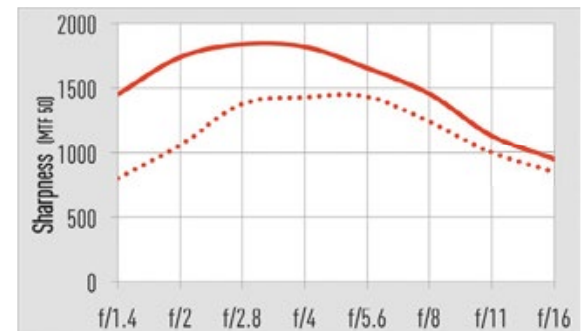
Price £1,499
Filter diameter 72mm
Lens elements 12
Groups 9
Diaphragm blades 11
Focal length 50mm
Maximum aperture f/1.4
Minimum aperture f/16
Dimensions 83.5x 108mm
Weight 778g

Amateur Photographer Testbench
GOLD
 ★★★★★

Sony Planar T* FE 50mm f/1.4 ZA

Sharpness

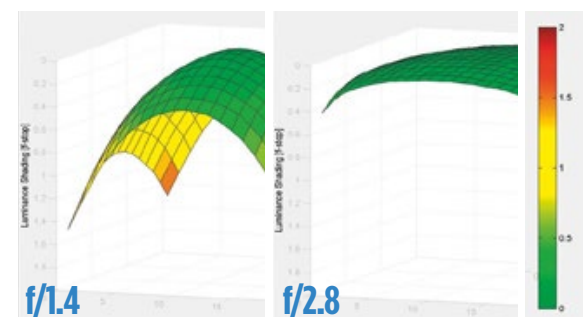
At first sight these graphs may look unremarkable, with central sharpness exceeding the corners at all apertures, and the sharpest results around f/2.8-f/5.6. But the actual numbers from our Applied Imaging MTF analysis are staggering; this lens is sharper in the centre at f/1.4 than most others manage at their very best. Remarkably, even in the corners it's as sharp as most other lenses are in the centre. This is impressive indeed.



Centre — Corner ·····

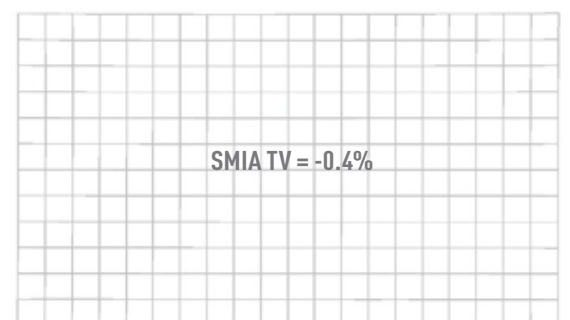
Shading

Inevitably for a full-frame fast prime, vignetting is readily visible, with our tests revealing 1.5 stops of fall-off in the corners of the frame at f/1.4. The smooth fall-off profile means that it's not objectionable, particularly in comparison to some zooms that show sudden brightness drops in the corners. Vignetting drops to less than 0.8 stops at f/2 and effectively disappears altogether at f/2.8.



Curvilinear distortion

Our tests reveal just a hint of pincushion distortion, but it's not visible in normal use. Unlike with many CSC lenses that rely on software compensation, the optical correction is almost complete. It's possible to apply some additional correction in-camera, but there's little need.



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Canon's EOS 450D can be bought second-hand for a little over £150



First camera

Q I don't own a camera, and never have, but I want to buy a start-up camera. I have a budget of £150, but I want something that I can take a great picture with. I don't mind if it's a second-hand model, and I don't need anything fancy, just something to get me going. The photos will mostly be of cars and pets, and I will be looking for something that I can upgrade in future with maybe a better lens. It's mostly for stills, but some video as well. By the sounds of it, I'd like a DSLR. I'm not too fussed about having the best of the best so long as it's a good piece of kit.

Jack96

A You would be doing very well if you managed to find a reasonably up-to-date used DSLR, complete with lens, from a camera dealer for under £150. You can find used Nikon D3000s with the standard kit zoom lens on eBay for under £150. This would be a fine starter DSLR for stills photography, but it doesn't shoot video. Canon's EOS 450D is a slightly better specification, but prices on eBay average slightly higher than £150.

The same money will secure a Micro Four Thirds mirrorless system camera, like an Olympus Pen E-PL1 or maybe a Panasonic Lumix DMC-GF1, and these shoot video, although their electronic viewfinders are optional extras and in the case of the GF1, it's not really worth bothering with.

Ian Burley

Seaside panoramas

Q If you want to take six images to join as a panoramic image, and the sea or other moving water is in the image, how can you stitch, say, a rolling wave in software so it is in a different position in each of the six images?

Russell Senior

A I think the only hope you have is to take a lot of shots of each component scene so you are recording the surf at many different positions. Then, when you construct your panorama, you might have enough images to select those where the positions of the surf line up appropriately. As cameras can now routinely shoot at ten frames per second or even more, this might just be possible, but it would be a tough job to achieve.

Using M-series lenses

Q I have used Leica M rangefinders for decades, and although I don't have as much gear as I used to I still have several Voigtlander and Leica lenses that I use on a Leitz Minolta CL and an M6. While I have been faithful to film for all these years, I think it's time to dabble in digital. I couldn't invest in a digital M body just yet, but would you recommend using a full-frame Sony Alpha 7 and a Leica M lens adapter for my M lenses?

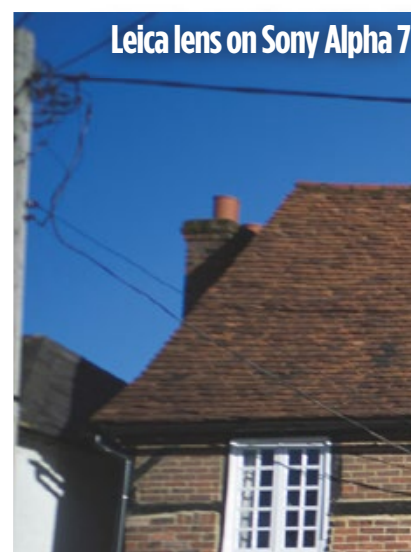
Robert Newlyn

A Until recent years, M-series lenses were not designed with digital photography in mind. Unlike film, digital sensors are not very tolerant of light projected onto them at even moderately off-perpendicular

angles of incidence. Lenses for digital cameras are designed with so-called telecentric characteristics, meaning the light projected is as near as possible – quite the opposite of rangefinder film camera lenses. These older lenses cause problems towards the corners of the frame, but it's worse with some lenses than others. Such problems include a progressive loss of fringing, definition, vignetting and colour shifts.

As a rule of thumb, longer lenses work better than wideangle lenses. Leica's own M-series digital bodies are more adapted to getting the most out of M-series lenses than Sony Alpha 7 bodies. Nevertheless, if you can, borrow an Alpha 7 body and try your own lenses to see how they fare.

Ian Burley



These crops from the top left of the frame show how the Leica M9 gives better results with a Leica Elmarit-M 24mm f/2.8 Asph lens compared to using it on the Sony Alpha 7

Panorama stitching software will also blend frames and this might work in your favour if the different positions of the moving surface lined up well.

Much more simply, but less challengingly, would simply be

to step further back and use a wideangle lens and crop the image to make a very low-aspect-ratio single-frame panorama. But that wouldn't be a challenge!

Ian Burley

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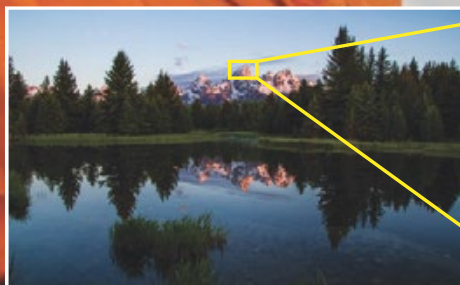
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My life in cameras

Grays of Westminster founder Gray Levett reveals the cameras that have shaped his photographic life

Gray Levett



Gray is the founder of Grays of Westminster in London, one of the most famous Nikon camera shops in the world. The shop, which recently celebrated its 30th anniversary, has won numerous awards and distinctions, and is

the first camera shop in the world to be granted its own coat of arms. As well as being a Nikon authority, Gray is a talented and highly experienced photographer in his own right. www.graysofwestminster.co.uk

1959 Kodak Brownie 127

The Kodak Brownie 127 was my first camera. I saw an advertisement for it in the *Eagle* comic and knew I had to have one. I was over the moon when my parents got one for me for my birthday. This started my fascination for photography, which has never diminished.



1967 Nikon F

I got my Nikon F after seeing Michelangelo Antonioni's movie *Blow-up*, in which a fashion photographer, played by David Hemmings, thinks he may have photographed a murder. In it he shoots with a Nikon F. It also included a sequence with The Yardbirds, featuring Jeff Beck and Jimmy Page. I also have my well-used F-36 motor drive in perfect working order. I would never sell it!



1986 Nikon F3

I started to shoot some of the musicians I was managing while at the same time working on establishing Grays of Westminster as exclusively Nikon. The F3 was a tough manual-focus camera that had a very reliable metering system and was a joy to use. It precipitated my growing interest in rock music, photography in general and Nikon in particular.



2014 Nikon D810

The Nikon D810 was a game changer for many photographers and an exceptional camera. It is a 35mm full-frame (FX-format) camera that has a CMOS sensor with 36.3 million pixels – the highest resolution currently available in a DSLR in the Nikon range. With no optical low-pass filter covering the sensor, the D810 should resolve an exceptional level of detail.



2016 Nikon D500

We waited so long for a replacement for the D300S that we were beginning to think it would never happen – then Nikon announced the D500. The D500 is the first professional-quality DX camera since the D300S of 2009. I think it has been worth the wait for the technology to progress. Advance orders for the D500 have been huge, actually matching the demand for the Nikon D5.



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Professor Newman on...

Changing light

The popularity of the light-emitting diode has led to a decline in flash tubes, but why is the LED so popular?

I am told that there is a worldwide decline in the market for flash tubes. My source is a large Chinese manufacturer of these components. For this company, the cause is the rise of the light-emitting diode (LED) light source, but the full story is more complex than that.

As sources of light, the white LED and the xenon flash tube have quite similar efficiency, even though they work in different ways. The xenon flash tube is simply a glass tube filled with xenon gas at a low pressure. By passing an electric current through the gas, it is heated to a sufficient temperature to form a plasma – a mix of disassociated atomic nuclei and electrons. This produces light in two ways. First, simply by being so hot, it emits electromagnetic radiation, as any hot body must. Second, those xenon atoms that are not dissociated are raised to energetic states, and release the excess energy by releasing photons – particles of light.

The spectrum produced by a xenon tube is quite similar to sunlight, which has made it a preferred source of artificial lighting for still photography. Its disadvantage is that passing sufficient current to produce light requires use of high voltages, which in turn means that xenon flashes include potentially dangerous and difficult to design circuitry.

The LED also emits light due to energetically excited atoms releasing the

‘As sources of light, the white LED and the xenon flash tube have quite similar efficiency’

excess energy as photons. In this case the atoms are contained in a semiconductor die, and only a small voltage is necessary to produce sufficient current to excite them, so the driving circuitry is simpler and cheaper to produce. The LED produces light only at a single wavelength (colour), and in order to make it produce white light the LED chip is coated with a phosphor, which converts the monochromatic light to a jumble of colours that we perceive as white. Cameras are a little more choosy and not all LEDs produce good colour rendition.

The LED became popular in photographic applications for two reasons. The first was as an auxiliary light source for

mobile-phone cameras, for which the inclusion of the high-voltage circuitry for a xenon tube would have been a significant inconvenience. The second was its use in video lighting. Prior to its use, this had depended on high-power incandescent lighting, which is far less efficient than the two light sources discussed so far, with the result that it generates a large amount of heat and requires a great deal of power.

Using incandescent lighting, battery-powered lighting was never a practicable proposition. The LED, which provides an efficient continuous light source, provided a solution to that particular issue. However, in doing so, it also provided an alternative for still photography. While the LED cannot emit a short burst of light with an intensity that matches a xenon tube, it can still be an effective light source for stills.

The xenon flash lasts a few thousandths of a second, while the LED, being continuous, can be used with longer exposures, increasing the amount of light captured. Further, modern digital cameras need much less light to produce good results than their film forebears did. These two factors mean that in many circumstances the LED forms a convenient portable light source, with the added advantage that it is usable for both stills and video.



LED lights have become popular for both stills and video

Bob Newman is currently Professor of Computer Science at the University of Wolverhampton. He has been working with the design and development of high-technology equipment for 35 years and two of his products have won innovation awards. Bob is also a camera nut and a keen amateur photographer

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Clifton Cameras Ltd..... 11		
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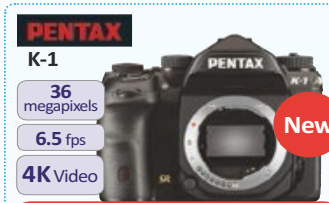
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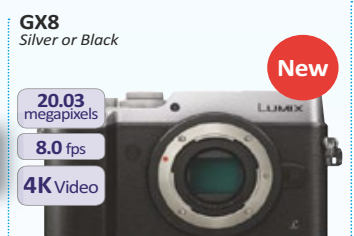
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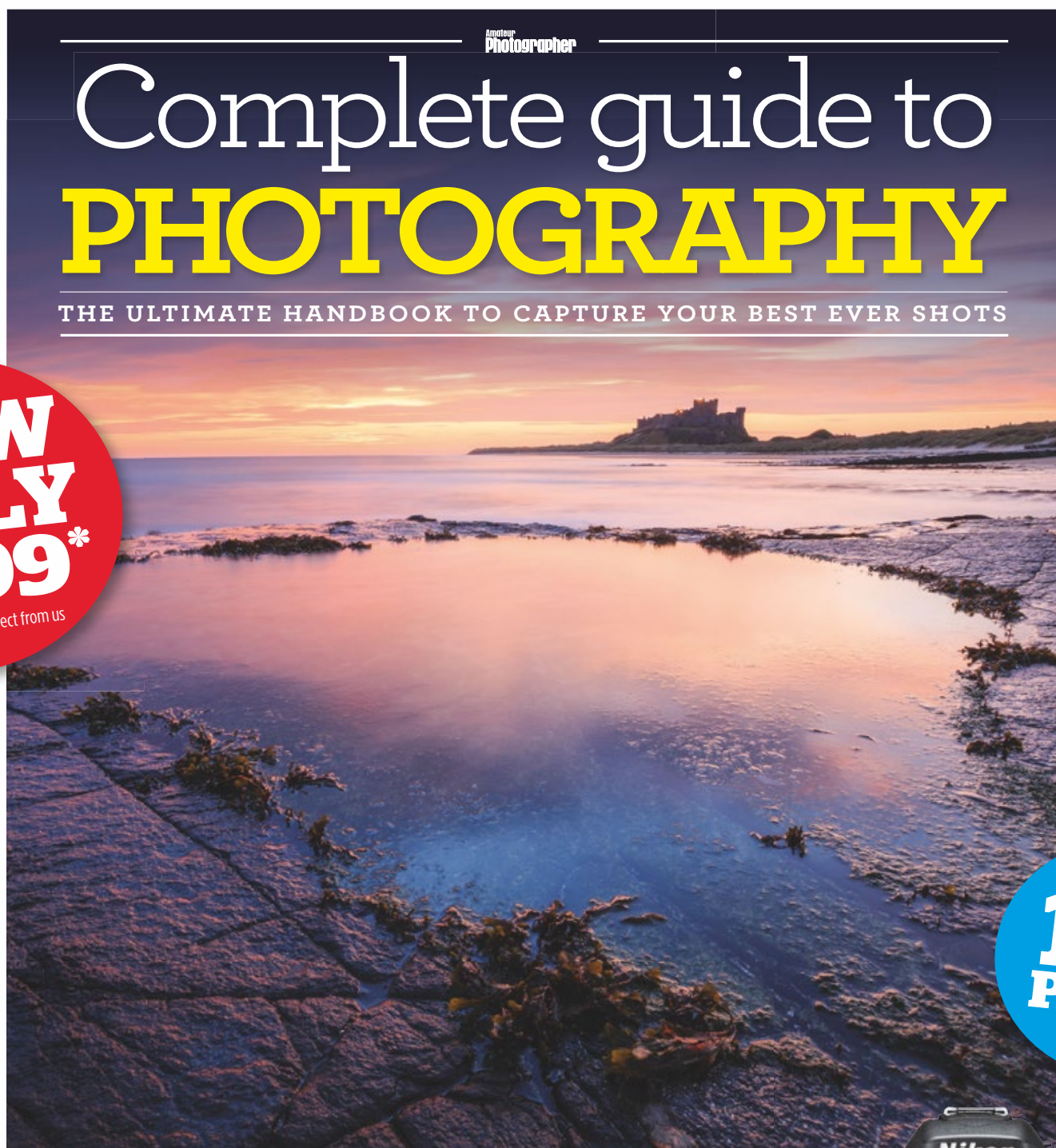
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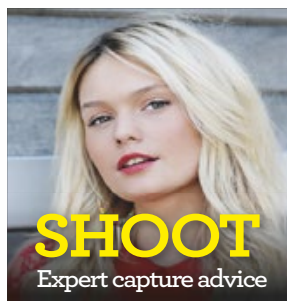
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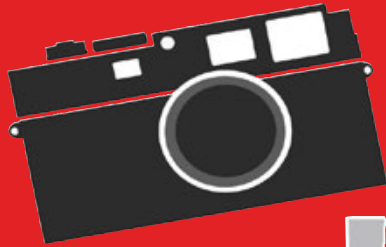
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Panasonic 14-50mm F2.8-3.5 OIS Asph	E++ £149
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Panasonic 35-100mm F2.8 GX OIS Vario E++ / Mint-	£599 - £649
Olympus 40-150mm F4-5.6 R ED M.Zuiko.....	Mint- £89
Panasonic 45-200mm F4-5.6 OIS.....	E++ £159 - £169
Olympus 45mm F1.8 M.Zuiko	Mint- £139
Olympus 75mm F1.8 ED Black M.Zuiko	Mint- £489
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EOS 30 Date Body Only.....	E+ £49
EOS 30E Body Only	As Seen £39
EOS 5 Body Only	E+ £59
EOS 50E + BP50 Grip	As Seen £39

EOS 50E Body Only	E+ / E++ £25 - £49
EOS RT Body Only	Unused £149
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14mm F2.8 L USM.....	Exc £499
14mm F2.8 L USM II	E+ / E++ £999 - £1,049
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50mm f2.5 EF Macro	E++ £159
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70-200mm f4 L USM	E+ / E++ £289 - £339
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80-200mm F4.5-5.6 EF III	E+ / E++ £39 - £49
80-200mm F4.5-5.6 USM.....	E+ £49
85mm F1.2 L USM	E+ £799
85mm F1.2 L USM MkII	E++ £949
85mm F1.8 USM.....	E+ / Mint- £179 - £199
100mm F2.8 L Macro IS USM	E++ £489
100mm F2.8 USM Macro.....	E+ / E++ £239 - £289
100-400mm F4.5-5.6 L IS USM	E+ £679
200mm F2.8 L USM II	E+ £349
300mm F2.8 L IS USM.....	Exc £1,789
300mm F4 L IS USM.....	E+ £529 - £589
400mm F2.8 L IS USM.....	E+ / Mint- £3,799 - £3,989
400mm F4 DO IS USM.....	E++ £2,899
400mm f5.6 L USM	E+ / Mint- £679 - £729
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F90X + MB10 Grip.....	E+	£49
F80 Black Body Only.....	Exc	£29
F80 Chrome Body Only	E+ / Mint-	£39 - £49
10-24mm F3.5-4.5 G AFS DX	E+ / E++	£439
14-24mm F2.8 G AFS ED	E+ / Mint-	£839 - £949
16-35mm F4 G AFS ED VR	E++	£649
16-80mm F2.8-4 E VR N.....	Mint-	£649
16-85mm F3.5-5.6 G ED VR AFS DXE+ / E++	£229 - £329	
17-35mm F2.8 ED AFS	E+	£549
17-55mm F2.8 G AFS DX IFED	E++	£349
18mm F2.8 AFD	E++	£599
18-35mm f3.5-4.5 AFD	Mint-	£219 - £249
18-55mm F3.5-5.6 G AFS DX VR	E++	£59
18-55mm F3.5-5.6 G AFS VR II.....	E++	£69
18-70mm F3.5-4.5 G AFS ED DXAs Seen / E++	£59 - £89	
18-105mm F3.5-4.5 G AFS ED DX VR	E++	£129
18-140mm F3.5-5.6 AF-S G ED VR DX.Mint-	£249 - £279	
18-200mm F3.5-5.6 G AFS DX VRil.....	E++	£299
20mm F2.8 AFD	E+ / E++	£269 - £349
20-35mm F2.8 AFD	E+	£399 - £449
24mm F1.4 G AFS ED	E+ / E++	£879 - £919
24mm F2.8 AFD	E++	£249
24-70mm F2.8 G AFS ED	E+	£689 - £749
24-70mm F3.5-5.6 IX.....	E+	£39
24-85mm F3.5-4.5 G ED VR	E++	£279
24-120mm F4 AFS G ED VR.....E++ / Mint-	£489 - £499	
28mm F2.8 AF	E++	£139
28mm F2.8 AFD.....	E+ / E++	£159 - £169
35mm F1.8 G AFS DX	E++	£99
35mm F2 AFD	E++	£149
35-70mm F2.8 AFD.....	E+ / E++	£159 - £249
35-135mm F3.5-4.5 AFN.....	As Seen	£59
40mm F2.8 G AFS DX Micro.....	Mint-	£125
45mm F2.8 D PC-E ED Macro.....	E++	£1,089
50mm F1.4 AFD	E++ / Mint-	£179
50mm f1.8 AFD	E+ / E++	£65 - £79
50mm F1.8 G AFS.....	E++ / Mint-	£119
50mm F1.8 G AFS (Retro).....	Mint-	£159
55-200mm F4-5.6 AFS DX G VR E++ / Mint-	£109 - £129	
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60-180mm f4-5.6 IX.....	E++	£49
70-180mm F4.5-5.6 AFD Micro.....	E++	£849
70-200mm F2.8 G AFS ED VR	E+	£499
70-200mm F2.8 G AFS ED VRil	E++	£1,289
70-200mm F4 G VR ED	Mint-	£749
70-210mm F4-5.6 AFD.....	E++	£79
70-210mm F4-5.6 AFN.....	E+	£79
70-300mm F4-5.6 AFG.....	E+ / E++	£59
70-300mm F4-5.6 ED AFD	E+ / E++	£119 - £149
70-300mm F4-5.6 G AFS VR.....	E++	£279
75-240mm F4.5-5.6 AFD.....	E+ / E++	£49 - £59
80-200mm F2.8 ED AFD	E+	£399 - £449
85mm F1.4 AFD	E+ / E++	£469 - £549
85mm F1.4 G AFS.....	E++	£979
85mm F1.8 AFD	E++	£229
85mm F2.8 D PC Micro.....	E++	£849
105mm F2 AF DC	E++	£529
105mm F2.8 AFD Micro.....	E++	£349 - £389
105mm F2.8 AFS G VR Micro	E++	£449
135mm F2 D AF DC	E++ / Mint-	£689 - £799
200mm F2 G AFS VR.....	E++	£2,199
200-400mm F4 G VR AFS IFED E+ / E++	£1,899 - £2,499	
300mm F2.8 G AFS ED VR	E+ / E++	£2,389 - £2,449
300mm F2.8 G AFS ED VR II.....	Mint-	£3,189
300mm F2.8 IF ED AFS	E++	£1,849
300mm F2.8 IFED AF-I.....	E++	£1,689
300mm F2.8 IFED AFS II	E+	£1,789
300mm F4 AFS IFED	E+ / Mint-	£529 - £639
400mm F2.8 AFS II	E++	£3,499
500mm F4 AFS IFED	E+	£2,599
500mm F4 P IFED AIS + TC16A Converter	E+	£1,249
Samyang 24mm F1.4 AE ED AS UMC.....	Mint-	£369
Samyang 35mm F1.4 AE AS UMC	E+	£279

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Sigma 14mm F2.8 D EX Asph	Exc	£249
Sigma 17-70mm F2.8-4 DC Macro HSM.....	E+	£129
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Sigma 18-50mm F2.8 EX DC Macro	E++	£129
Sigma 28-70mm F2.8 D EX	E+	£129
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Tamron 70-200mm F2.8 VC USD	Mint-	£599
Tamron 70-300mm F4-5.6 Di VC USD.....	E++	£189
Tamron 90mm F2.8 SP Di Macro Exc / Mint-	£189 -	£199
Tamron 200-400mm F5.6 AF LD.....	E++	£169 - £199
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Tokina 20-35mm F2.8 ATX Pro.....	E++	£269
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Tokina 50-135mm F2.8 DX ATX Pro	E++	£329
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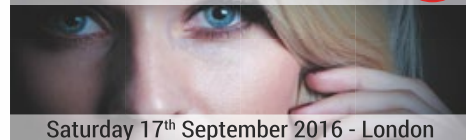
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Used Nikon 300mm f2.8 AFS VR II - £3299

- Mint- condition , minimal signs of use, boxed.
 - With box, case, hood, strap, front lens cover, rear lens cap, instructions.
- This is a very serious pro quality lens. It has very fast focusing, the later VR11 vibration reduction system and very high quality optics. Its a lot lighter than 500mm & 600mm lenses, so easier to use, more manoeuvrable. Suited to work with Nikon converters so if you are traveling this saves you a lot of weight and space. Ideal for wildlife, sports, airshows and lots of other events.



Used Nikon 600mm f4 AFS VR - £5999

- Excellent ++ condition, signs of use.
 - In full working order.
 - Supplied with Nikon CT-607 lens case, two piece lens hood, tripod mounts, front lens cover, rear lens cap, keys, straps and instructions.
 - Sold with a 3 month warranty.
- This lens is simply amazing. It has super fast quiet focusing, a great VR system and professional image quality. Nikon long telephoto lenses are designed to work with a range of Nikon tele converters, offering even more scope to sports, wildlife photographers etc.



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300D body £79
70D body box £549
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70-200 F2.8 EX DG mac £399
70-300 F4/5.6 DG £79
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120-300 F2.8 EX DG £699
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Chimney £179
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28-85 F3.5/4.5 £99
28-100 F3.5/5.6 D £49
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70-300 F4/5.6 DG OS £169
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D3200 body black box £199
D80 body £149
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24-120 F4 AFS VR £699
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28 F2.8 AFD £129
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28-300 F3.5/5.6 AFS VR £649
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35-70 F3.3/4.5 AF £59
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50 F1.8 AFD £99
50 F1.8 AF £79
55-200 F4/5.6 AFS VR £99
55-300 F4.5/5.6 AFS VR £199
60 F2.8 AFD £249
60 F2.8 AF £199
70-200 F2.8 AFS VR £1299
70-300 F4/5.6 AFD £129
70-300 F4 G £79
80-200 F2.8 AFD £299
85 F1.4 AFD £499
85 F1.8 AFD £249
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105 F2.8 AFD £369
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70-300 F4/5.6 APO DG £99
105 F2.8 EX OS £269
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135-400 F4.5/5.6 £299
150-500 F5/6.3 DG OS £499
150-600 F5/6.3 OS Sport £999
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17-50 F2.8 XR DII £199
18-250 F3.5/6.3 £149
70-300 F4/5.6 £79

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FM2n body chr £249
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28 F2.8 E box £69
28-85 F3.5/4.5 AIS £199
35-70 F3.3/4.5 AIS £129
35-70 F3.5 AIS £99
35-105 F3.5/4.5 AIS £79
50 F1.8 AIS pancake £139
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PGI72 Pixma Pro 10 Originals: Set of 10 Colours 14ml each	£94.99 £9.99	Compatibles: No.16 Set of 4 No.16 Black 12ml No.16 Colours 12ml each	£14.99 £3.99 £3.99
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CLi8 Pixma Pro 9000 Originals: Set of 8 Colours 14ml each Compatibles: Set of 8 Colours 14ml each	£74.99 £9.99 £27.99 £3.99	Compatibles: No.18 Set of 4 No.18 Black 12ml No.18 Colours 12ml each	£14.99 £3.99 £3.99
PGI9 Pixma Pro 9500 Originals: Set of 10 Colours 14ml each Compatibles: Set of 10 Colours 14ml each	£84.99 £8.99 £44.99 £4.99	No.24 Elephant Inks Originals: No.24 Set of 6 No.24 Colours 4.6ml each No.24XL Set of 6 No.24XL Colours 8.7ml each	£41.99 £7.99 £64.99 £11.99
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PGI525/CLi526 Set of 5 PGI525 Black 19ml CLi526 Colours 9ml	£42.99 £9.99 £8.99	Compatibles: No.26 Set of 4 No.26 Black 10ml No.26 Colours 7ml each	£14.99 £3.99 £3.99
PGI550/CLi551 Set of 5 PGI550 Black 15ml CLi551 Colours 7ml	£37.99 £9.99 £7.99	T0481-T0486 Seahorse Inks Originals: Set of 6 Colours 13ml each Compatibles: Set of 6 Colours 13ml each	£54.99 £11.99 £10.99 £10.99 £13.99 £15.99 £69.99 £16.99
PGI550XL/CLi551XL Set of 5 PGI550XL Black 22ml CLi551XL Colours 11ml	£54.99 £11.99 £10.99	T0541-T0549 Frog Inks Originals: Set of 8 Colours 13ml each Compatibles: Set of 8 Colours 13ml each	£54.99 £11.99 £10.99 £10.99 £19.99 £14.99
PG540XL Black 21ml CL541 Colour 8ml CL541XL Colour 15ml PG545XL Black 15ml CL546XL Colour 13ml	£15.99 £13.99 £15.99 £13.99 £15.99	T0591-T0599 Lily Inks Originals: Set of 8 Colours 13ml each Compatibles: Set of 8 Colours 13ml each	£105.99 £14.99 £89.99 £11.99 £27.99 £3.99
Compatibles: PGI5 Black 27ml CLi8 Colours 13ml PGI5/CLi8 Set of 5 PGI520 Black 19ml CLi521 Colours 9ml PGI520/CLi521 Set of 5 PGI525 Colours 9ml PGI525/CLi526 Set of 5 PGI550XL Black 25ml CLi551XL Colours 12ml PGI550/CLi551XL Set of 5 BCi6 Colours 15ml PG40 Black 28ml CL41 Colour 24ml PG50 Black 28ml CL51 Colour 24ml PG510 Black 11ml CL511 Colour 11ml PG512 Black 18ml CL513 Colour 15ml PG540XL Black 21ml CL541XL Colour 15ml PG545XL Black 15ml PG546XL Black 21ml	£4.99 £3.99 £19.99 £4.99 £3.99 £19.99 £4.99 £3.99 £19.99 £4.99 £3.99 £12.99 £16.99 £12.99 £14.99 £13.99 £15.99 £13.99 £15.99 £14.99 £11.99 £12.99	More Epson inks >>>	

Albums & Frames

We now stock a comprehensive range of frames, mounts, albums and accessories. The full range can be viewed on our website, with detailed close-up images of each product to help you choose the perfect way to display your printed photographs. Below is just a tiny sample of what we offer:



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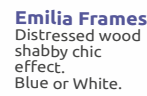
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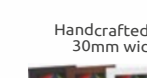
Grafton Albums
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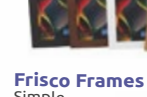
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T0791-T0796 Owl Inks Originals: Set of 6 Colours 11.1ml each Compatibles: Set of 6 Colours 11.1ml each	£72.99 £12.99 £19.99 £3.99	Compatibles: No.15 Black 46ml £4.99 No.21 Black 10ml £7.99 No.22 Colour 21ml £11.99 No.45 Black 45ml £4.99 No.56 Black 24ml £9.99 No.57 Colour 24ml £12.99 No.78 Colour 36ml £9.99 No.110 Colour 12ml £10.99 No.300XL Black 18ml £14.99 No.300XL Colour 18ml £16.99 No.301XL Black 15ml £14.99 No.301XL Colour 18ml £16.99 No.337 Black 21ml £10.99 No.338 Black 21ml £10.99 No.339 Black 34ml £12.99 No.343 Colour 21ml £12.99 No.344 Colour 21ml £14.99 No.348 Photo 21ml £12.99 No.350XL Black 30ml £14.99 No.351XL Colour 20ml £16.99 No.363 Black 20ml £6.99 No.363 Colours 6ml each £4.99 No.363 SET OF 6 £24.99 No.364 Black 10ml £4.99 No.364 Colours 5ml each £3.99 No.364 SET OF 4 £15.99 No.364XL Black 18ml £8.99 No.364XL Colours 11ml each £7.99 No.364XL SET OF 4 £31.99 No.920XL SET OF 4 £19.99 No.932XL SET OF 4 £29.99 No.940XL SET OF 4 £29.99 No.950XL SET OF 4 £29.99	
T0801-T0806 Hummingbird Inks Originals: Set of 6 Colours 7.4ml each Compatibles: Set of 6 Colours 7.4ml each	£49.99 £8.99 £19.99 £3.99	Originals: Set of 8 Colours 11.4ml each Compatibles: Set of 8 Colours 11.4ml each	£66.99 £9.99 £27.99 £3.99
T0871-T0879 Flamingo Inks Originals: Set of 8 Colours 11.4ml each Compatibles: Set of 8 Colours 11.4ml each	£66.99 £9.99 £27.99 £3.99	T0961-T0969 Husky Inks Originals: Set of 8 Colours 11.4ml each Compatibles: Set of 8 Colours 11.4ml each	£69.99 £8.99 £27.99 £3.99
T1571-T1579 Turtle Inks Originals: Set of 8 Colours 25.9ml each	£149.99 £18.99	T7601-T7609 Killer Whale Originals: Set of 9 Colours 25.9ml each	£169.99 £18.99

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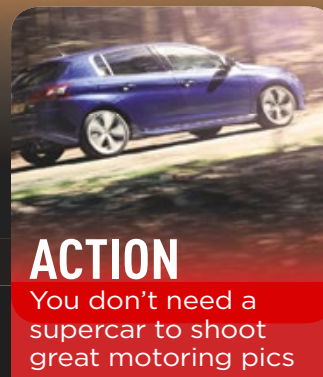


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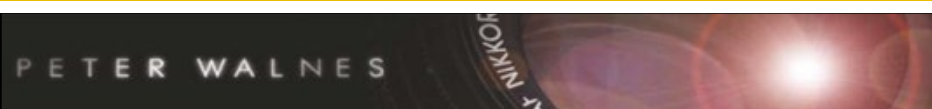
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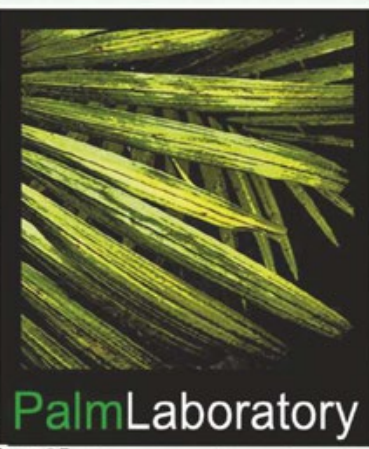


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Final Analysis

Roger Hicks considers...
 'Derive', 2013, by Didier Gillis

Didier Gillis's big, multi-layer gum bichromates are, well, challenging. Some people would dismiss many of them as pornographic: I had to choose quite carefully to find one that was suitable for publication. To be honest, I don't like all of them, but the ones I do like, I like very much and in my view he deserves to be better known.

'Tangled' nudes are very much a matter of taste. Even if they are to your taste, they are extremely difficult to do well, so why does this one succeed? There's the composition, of course, but there's also the technique, gum bichromate. Would it be as good if it were a straight silver-halide print? I suspect that probably it would, but it's impossible to say for sure. I'm not sure if solarisation was involved, or a manipulation of one or more internegatives, but it doesn't really matter. Art either works or it doesn't, and no one has any right to tell anyone else what to like, or how to make art.

The tonality is curious and reminiscent of the dawn of photography: gum bichromate processes date back to Alphonse Poitevin (1855) and Joseph Swan (1864). Most nudes from the first few decades of the medium are, however, relentlessly literal, overtly pornographic or both. They are also inclined to be 'classical' – that is, paying homage, or at least lip service, to the time of Ancient Rome. This was a device that was equally popular with painters such as Gustave Boulanger and Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema: an excuse for portraying scantily clad or entirely unclad juvenile pulchritude.

Dividing line

The anonymity of the pose (you can't see her face) is one of those things that people often use as a dividing line between pornography, erotica and fine art, but I'm not sure that any such lines can be drawn. If you go to www.didiergillis.com you will find a textbook example of a site that is NSFW (not suitable for work), but if you could see his massive original prints you might well agree that if this is not fine art, it is hard to say what is. There is, after all, no reason why some types of subject matter



© DIDIER GILLIS

'The tonality is curious, and reminiscent of the dawn of photography'

should be excluded: not everything has to be suitable for the delicate eyes of carefully sheltered pupils at an infant school.

This is something altogether more modern than the 'classical' nude, and not

just in pose and tonality. Plenty of photographers even today have blinkered views of what photography 'is', or 'ought to be', both technically and aesthetically. They miss the point entirely. There is plenty of photography that I find to be saccharine or clichéd or otherwise not to my taste, and I believe that there is both good and bad art, but I have considerable difficulty with the concept of 'not art'.

AP

Roger Hicks has been writing about photography since 1981 and has published more than three dozen books on the subject, many in partnership with his wife Frances Schultz (visit his new website at www.rogerandfrances.eu). Every week in this column Roger deconstructs a classic or contemporary photograph. Next week he considers an image by Lola Ledoux.

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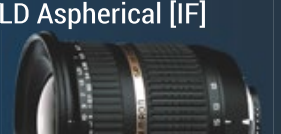
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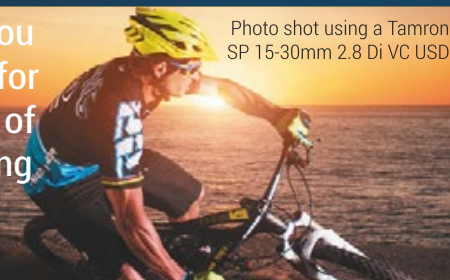
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